NATION

Stampede in Goa temple a repeat event, says report

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BUSINESS

7 top 10 firms see MCAP surge of Rs 2.31l crore

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SPORTS

Parag's 95 in vain as KKR beat RR by 1 run in thriller

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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India cuts Chenab water flow to Pakistan

Pakistan shuts ports for Indian ships after New Delhi bans imports from Islamabad

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD, 4 MAY

India has halted the flow of water through the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River and is planning similar action at the Kishanganga Dam on the Jhelum, following its suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan, sources said on Sunday.

The move comes in the wake of the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, which left 26 people dead, mostly tourists. India's suspension of the decades-old World Bank-brokered treaty signals a significant escalation in bilateral tensions.

Both Baglihar, located in Jammu's Ramban district, and Kishanganga in north Kashmir, are hydroelectric projects that allow India to regulate the timing of water releases—an issue long contested by Pakistan. Islamabad has previously raised concerns about their impact on downstream flows and sought World Bank arbitration.

Alongside the water stoppage, India has imposed sweeping trade and maritime restrictions. On Saturday, it banned the import of all goods from Pakistan, including those routed through third countries, and prohibited the entry of Pakistani vessels into Indian ports. Indian ships were also barred from visiting Pakistani ports. The exchange of mail and parcels between the two countries has also been suspended.

In response, Pakistan's Ministry of Maritime Affairs issued a reciprocal order, banning Indian-flagged ships from all Pakistani ports and preventing Pakistani ships from docking in India. The ministry cited maritime sovereignty, economic interests, and national security as reasons for the move.

These developments follow India's earlier steps including the shutdown of the Attari land border crossing and the downgrading of diplomatic ties. The Indian government described the decisions as necessary to ensure national security.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's military announced a training launch of the Abdali surface-to-surface missile, with a 450 km range, stating it was conducted to validate operational readiness. India denounced the launch as a "blatant act of provocation."

Amid the heightened tensions, Sri Lankan police searched a flight from Chennai after a tip-off about a suspect linked to the Pahalgam attack. The aircraft was cleared after inspection. Indian agencies have identified four suspects—two of whom are Pakistani nationals. —*PTI*

The Baglihar hydroelectric power project regulates water flow in the Chenab river **PHOTO: ANI**

> **As the defence minister, it is my responsibility to work with my soldiers and ensure the protection of the country's borders. And it is my responsibility to give a befitting reply, by working with the armed forces, to those who cast an evil eye on our country**
> —Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL MEETS PM

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Sunday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is understood to have discussed the security situation arising out of the rising tensions between India and Pakistan over the deadly Pahalgam terror attack.

The meeting came less than 24 hours after Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi apprised the prime minister on the overall situation in the critical sea lanes in the Arabian Sea. —*PTI*

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IRANIAN FM TO VISIT PAK, INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 4 MAY

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will arrive in Islamabad on Monday for a day-long visit, ahead of his scheduled trip to New Delhi later this week, amid heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Araghchi, accompanied by a high-level delegation, will hold talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. Discussions will focus on bilateral relations and the evolving regional situation, particularly Indo-Pak tensions, according to media reports quoting diplomatic sources.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei confirmed that Araghchi will consult with senior Pakistani officials and later travel to India as part of Tehran's regional diplomatic outreach. —*PTI*

Drunk flyer molests air hostess on Delhi flight

MUMBAI, 4 MAY

An air hostess was allegedly molested by a drunk male passenger on a Delhi-Shirdi flight in Maharashtra, police said on Sunday. The accused was apprehended after the IndiGo flight landed at Shirdi airport on Friday afternoon. The police official said the passenger touched the air hostess inappropriately near the toilet of the flight. Aggrieved by the indecent act, the air hostess alerted her crew manager, who, in turn, informed security personnel after the flight landed at the Shirdi airport, the official said, adding that the passenger was taken into custody. He was escorted to Rahata police station. His medical examination confirmed that he had consumed alcohol. The official said the accused was served a notice by Rahata Police. —*PTI*

Warren Buffett to retire from leading Berkshire Hathaway

OMAHA, 4 MAY

Billionaire Warren Buffett shocked an arena full of shareholders Saturday by announcing that he will retire at the end of the year, bringing the curtain down on a six-decade run leading Berkshire Hathaway that made him the most influential investor in the world. Buffett said he will recommend to Berkshire Hathaway's board on Sunday that Vice Chairman Greg Abel should replace him. Abel has been Buffett's designated successor for years, and he already manages all of Berkshire's non-insurance businesses. But it was always assumed that he would not take over until after Buffett's death. Previously the 94-year-old Buffett always said he had no plans to retire. —*PTI*

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India suspends flights to and from Tel Aviv

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Air India suspended its flight operations to and from Tel Aviv till 6 May following a missile attack near the city's airport on Sunday morning. Flight operations were halted temporarily to ensure the safety of its passengers and staff. On Sunday Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a missile on Israel that landed near Terminal 3 of Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, injuring six. The attack occurred less than an hour before an Air India flight, en route to Tel Aviv from Delhi, was scheduled to land. The airline's ground staff assisted customers with alternative arrangements. Passengers with Air India tickets for travel on 4 May to 6 can either reschedule their travel plans without penalty or get a full refund upon cancellation. —*PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

SC to resume hearing on Waqf Act today

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of pleas challenging the Waqf (Amendment) Act's constitutional validity, weeks after the government paused two central aspects of the contentious law in the face of probing questions by the top court.

The Centre assured the apex court on 17 April that it would neither denotify waqf properties, including "waqf by user", nor make any appointments to the Central Waqf Council and boards till 5 May.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Centre, made the assurance while informing a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan that the law, passed by Parliament with "due deliberations", should not be stayed without hearing the government.

The Centre had also strongly opposed the apex court's proposal to pass an interim order against the denotification of Waqf properties, including "waqf by user", aside from staying a provision allowing the inclusion of non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and boards.

The top court had noted the submissions of Mehta and said that waqf properties, including "waqf by user", already registered or declared by way of notification, shall not be disturbed and denotified till the next date of hearing.

It had then granted a week's time to the Centre to file a preliminary response to the pleas challenging the validity of the law.

The top court recently refused to entertain any fresh plea against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, saying it had already been made clear that the court would hear only five of the over 70 litigants on the issue. —*PTI*

BSF adds 16 battalions for Pak borders

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The Border Security Force (BSF) is all set to get the government's final nod to raise 16 more battalions, comprising around 17,000 troopers and set up two forward headquarters for its western and eastern commands guarding the Pakistan and Bangladesh frontiers respectively.

It will be a shot in the arm for the force that has heightened vigil in the east following Sheikh Hasina government's fall in Bangladesh in 2024 and a renewed challenge on the Pakistan front after the Pahalgam massacre.

The BSF will raise the 16 new battalions over the next five to six years.

Some final approvals including sanction from the Union finance ministry will be granted soon.

The paramilitary force now has 193 battalions, each comprising 1,000 troopers.

The new battalions will guard 6,726 km of the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders as per a blueprint being prepared by BSF.

The Union Home Ministry approved two field command bases in Jammu and Mizoram.

The force had sent a proposal to the home ministry to raise 20-21 new battalions owing to "the fast-changing security dynamics, terrain's profile and related issues." BSF's Jammu frontier sectors are located at Rajouri, Sunderbani, Jammu and Indreshwar Nagar. Under its Mizoram and Cachar frontier headquartered in Assam, the sectors are located at Silchar, Aizawl and one in Manipur. BSF will recruit and train men and women for these new battalions. Around 1,047 km of the two borders is unfenced. The force has 1,760 border posts along these two frontiers. —*PTI*

Border Security Force personnel patrol along the India-Pakistan border **Photo: PTI**

Want allies not preachers: EAM to Europe

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

India is looking for "partners" and not "preachers", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday, in a veiled message to Europe.

In an interactive session, Jaishankar said Europe has "entered a certain zone of a reality check" and must display some sensitivity and mutuality of interest for deeper ties with India.

Jaishankar said India has always been "very careful not to prescribe a solution" on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"We have not told one or the other party to do this or do that. And that is important to remember because that is a courtesy that is not always granted to us," he said. "When we look out at the world, we look for partners; we do not look for preachers, particularly preachers who do not practice at home and preach abroad," he said. —*PTI*

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Jaishankar called upon EU to accept mutuality in interests and ties after it had asked India to exercise restraint amid tensions. **PHOTO: X**

SAMSUNG INDIA CHALLENGES $520M TAX PENALTY

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Samsung India has appealed to the Customs Excise & Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) against a $520 million penalty for allegedly misclassifying mobile tower equipment imports sold to Reliance Jio between 2018 and 2021. In its 281-page filing, Samsung argued Indian authorities were aware of the practice, citing similar imports by Reliance until 2017 without tariffs. —*PTI*

IN KALABURAGI

Brahmins protest as janivara removed at NEET centres

KALABURAGI, 4 MAY

Members of the Brahmin community staged a protest outside a NEET exam centre here, demanding accountability after some students of the community were asked to remove their "sacred thread" (Janivara) before entering the exam hall.

This incident comes close on the heels of a similar one during the Common Entrance Test held for engineering and other vocational courses on 16 April, where the sacred threads of Brahmin boys were also removed. Following the incident, the state government initiated action against the officials involved, including registration of a case. It also issued directions to prevent such occurrences in the future.

However, on Sunday, the Brahmin candidates were either asked to remove the sacred thread or had it cut before entering the exam hall.

Enraged over this, hundreds of community members gathered outside the NEET exam centre, chanted slogans and staged a sit-in demonstration.

A video released shows people displaying their sacred threads and confronting security officials outside the venue. Protesters accused exam officials for hurting their religious sentiment and also accused the government of "failing" to enforce its own instructions and repeatedly humiliating the community. The protest was triggered after a student, Shripad Patil, was allegedly asked to remove his sacred thread at an exam centre for NEET UG exam. —*PTI*

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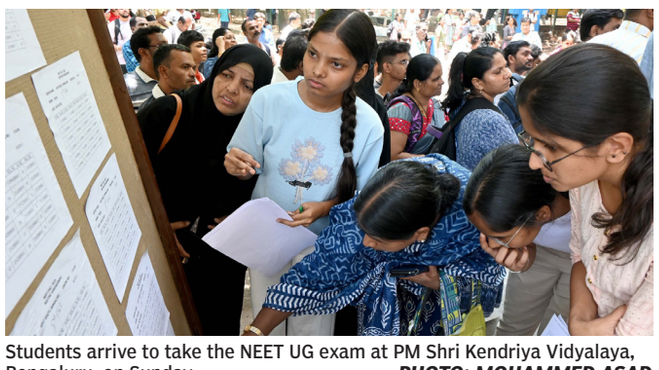

Students arrive to take the NEET UG exam at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bengaluru, on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

NEET-UG HELD AT 5,400 CENTRES UNDER TIGHT SECURITY

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Medical entrance exam NEET-UG was held at more than 5,400 centres around the country amid strict monitoring and security measures on Sunday, officials said.

More than 22.7 lakh candidates had registered for the test. The official attendance data will be available in a few hours.

Mock drills were held at all National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) centres on Saturday to ensure smooth conduct of the nationwide exam. Most of the centres were located in government and government-aided schools, colleges, and institutions. The strict measures came a year after alleged irregularities, including paper leaks, were flagged in NEET-UG that put its integrity under scanner. —*PTI*

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70-year-old woman dies after falling from terrace

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

A 70-year-old woman, identified as Vijayalakshmi, died after slipping and falling from the terrace of her three-storey home in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, HSR Layout, during the early hours of Sunday. Preliminary investigations by local police suggest the incident occurred around 4.30am while she was on the terrace; authorities believe she may have accidentally tripped. Following the tragic incident, her daughter filed a complaint at the HSR Layout police station. A case has been registered, and police are conducting further investigations to determine the precise circumstances surrounding the fall. The community is mourning the loss of Vijayalakshmi, remembered fondly by those who knew her. *—Salar News*

Mysuru celebrates Bhagiratha Jayanthi

MYSURU, 4 MAY

Chamaraja MLA K Harishgowda on Sunday paid tribute to Saint Bhagiratha for his enduring contributions to social welfare, during the Bhagiratha Jayanthi celebrations held at Kalamandira in the city. The event was jointly organised by the Department of Kannada and Culture and the District Administration. In his inaugural address, Harishgowda urged people to embrace the values of Saint Bhagiratha and join the social mainstream, calling for an end to discrimination based on caste and religion. MLC Thimmaiah also highlighted Bhagiratha's legendary efforts in bringing the River Ganga to Earth, underlining his role in fulfilling the people's needs. "Even today, a large number of people revere the goddess Ganga for her sacrifices and for bringing water to the Earth," he noted. Retired Excise Commissioner Jagannath Rao Sagar, speaking on the occasion, recalled Bhagiratha's role in uniting various backward communities under a single identity. *—Salar News*

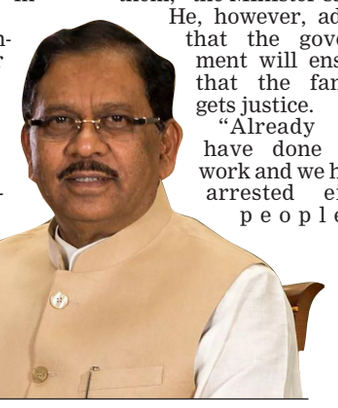
No NIA probe in Hindu activist's murder

HM says Shetty faced 5 criminal cases due to which Ministers did not meet his family

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

State Home Minister G Parameshwara on Sunday rejected BJP's demand for an NIA probe into Mangaluru Hindutva activist's murder.

Suhas Shetty, a known rowdy sheeter and a Hindutva activist, was murdered by an unidentified group late on Thursday within the Bajpe police station limits in Mangaluru city.



"It is their (BJP's) opinion. Our view is that our police are doing their job very well. Eight people have been arrested in this connection and the investigation is in progress," Parameshwara told reporters here.

He said at this stage, there was no need to hand over the case to the NIA.

When asked why no one from the government visited and consoled the bereaved family members, Parameshwara said Shetty had five criminal cases against him.

"Please know that this is a murder case. There were five criminal cases against him. That's the reason that no one from the government, I mean the public representatives, either me or anyone else, met them," the Minister said.

He, however, added that the government will ensure that the family gets justice.

"Already we have done our work and we have arrested eight people," Parameshwara explained.

Parameshwara also said that an anti-communal task force will be constituted permanently in the communally sensitive coastal State region.

Those arrested are Abdul Safwan, Niyaz Ahmed, Mohammad Muzzammil, Khalandar Shafi, Adil Mehrooz Mohammad Rizwan, Ranjit and Nagaraj.

Following the murder, the VHP called for a bandh on Friday and shops were shut in Mangaluru city. *—PTI*

Suhas Shetty, a known rowdy sheeter and a Hindutva activist, was murdered by an unidentified group late in Mangaluru city, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

CM unaware of State relief 'funding' murder

HAVERI, 4 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said he was unaware of reports suggesting that compensation given to murder victim Mohammed Fazil's family was allegedly used to hire contract killers involved in the murder of Hindutva activist Suhas Shetty.

In 2022, Fazil was murdered in Surathkal by a gang of masked men. History sheeter Suhas Shetty is the prime accused in the murder case.

The Chief Minister said he would discuss the matter with Home Minister G Parameshwara and district in charge Minister of Dakshina Kannada Dinesh Gundu Rao to get more information.

He was replying to a query on police investigation revealing that Rs five lakh out of Rs 25 lakh compensation paid to Fazil's family by the state government after his murder in 2022, was allegedly paid to the contract killers to eliminate Suhas Shetty.

On Friday, Suhas Shetty was hacked to death. Eight people, including Fazil's brother, have been arrested in this connection. *—PTI*

CM accuses Centre of blocking Mahadayi project

HUBBALLI, 4 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday accused the Central government of deliberately withholding environmental clearance for the Mahadayi river project, crucial for addressing water scarcity in North State, especially in Hubballi and Dharwad.

Speaking to reporters in Hubballi, Siddaramaiah launched a sharp attack on Union Minister for Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi, representing Dharwad constituency, alleging he has failed to secure Centre's approval for the project. "He is a senior minister at the Centre. Why has he not ensured environmental clearance? Despite repeated appeals, letters and visits to Delhi by myself and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, Centre has not acted," CM said.

He claimed the only roadblock is environmental clearance, and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of succumbing to pressure from Goa. "Scared of Goa, the PM is not giving us clearance. Joshi does not even raise the issue," he alleged.

Mahadayi project proposes to divert water from the river's tributaries — Kalasa and Banduri — to meet drinking water needs in North Karnataka. However, Goa has opposed the move, arguing that the river passes through the Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary in North Goa and that the project would harm environment.

Though the Centre approved State's Detailed Project Report two years ago, the environmental nod remains pending.

Siddaramaiah also announced a public event on 20 May in Vijayanagara district to mark Congress government's two-year anniversary and highlight its achievements. *—PTI*

'DO NOT GENERALISE'

5 boys threatened me over Kannada song: Sonu Nigam

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Singer Sonu Nigam, who is currently facing an FIR for allegedly offending the sentiments of Kannadigas during a recent concert in City, has stated that he was "threatened" by a small group of boys to sing in Kannada at the event.

He also urged people "not to generalise" or hold the entire community responsible for the actions of a few.

An FIR was registered at the Avalahalli Police Station in City on Saturday against the popular playback singer for reportedly retorting, "Kannada. Kannada. This is the reason behind the incident in Pahalgam," in response to an audience member's request to sing in Kannada.

In his complaint, Dharamaraj Ananthayya, the president of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike, said Nigam had not only insulted Kannadigas but also likened their cultural pride and linguistic identity to violence and intolerance by linking the request for a Kannada song to a terrorist act.

Sonu Nigam **PHOTO: PTI**

Nigam, 51, shared his side of the story in a video on Instagram posted on Saturday.

"There were four-five goon-type people who were shouting 'Kannada-Kannada' angrily. There were girls who were requesting them not to shout like that, asking them not to disturb the scene. It's important to tell those four-five people that terrorists in Pahalgam didn't ask the language of the people..."

"You have to not allow them to threaten you as an audience to make you sing. If someone is sowing the seeds of hatred in the land of love, we must stop them. Kannadigas are beautiful people, so please do not generalise them," he said. *—PTI*

> "There were four-five goon-type people who were shouting 'Kannada-Kannada' angrily. There were girls who were requesting them not to shout like that," said Sonu Nigam

BJP MLA booked for 'provocative' speech at temple

MANGALURU, 4 MAY

A case has been registered against BJP MLA Harish Punja for allegedly making a provocative speech during the Brahmakalashotsava (consecration ceremony) at the Gopalakrishna Temple in Thekkaru village in Dakshina Kannada district.

According to the police, complainant Ibrahim SB has alleged that Punja made derogatory remarks against the Muslim community and allegedly attempted to incite communal hatred through his speech.

The speech in question was reportedly delivered in the presence of a gathering during the religious event.

The complaint stated that the content of the speech could sow discord between religious communities and disturb communal harmony in the region.

Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case under sections 196 and 352(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), the new Indian criminal code that recently replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC). *—PTI*

Students arrive to take the NEET UG exam at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bengaluru, on Sunday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

1.49L attend NEET exam at 381 centres across State

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-UG) took place seamlessly across 381 examination centres in State on Sunday, attracting over 149,000 registered candidates.

Held from 2pm to 5pm, students gained entry to the centres between 11am and 1.30pm. Each candidate was required to present their admit card, a valid government-issued photo ID—such as an Aadhaar card or college ID—along with a postcard-sized photograph and two passport-sized images, as stipulated by the National Testing Agency (NTA).

Robust security measures were implemented, with police personnel stationed at all centres to ensure safety and smooth operations.

Mandatory biometric attendance was enforced, along with strict adherence to guidelines printed on admit cards.

Prohibitory orders were enacted around the centres to avert any disruptions, and access was restricted to authorised officials and designated staff, with the general public barred from entry. *—Salar News*

Four held for illegal sale of IPL tickets

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

In a swift operation targeting black market ticket sales ahead of the eagerly anticipated IPL match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK), the Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested four individuals for illegally selling match tickets at inflated prices.

The accused have been identified as Charan Raj, Vinay, Venkatasai Kiran, and Harshavardhan. CCB officials conducted a raid on Pipeline Road within the Yeshwanthpur police jurisdiction.

One suspect was apprehended while selling tickets for Tata IPL T20 match at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, with police seizing 12 tickets worth Rs 1,200 each and a mobile phone.

Further interrogation led to the identification of three accomplices, who were later arrested.

Authorities discovered Rs 1 lakh in cash, an additional 20 tickets valued at Rs 1,200 each, and three mobile phones. *—Salar News*

Youth abducted, murdered over relationship in City

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

A 19-year-old delivery boy was allegedly abducted and murdered on Saturday night in the Devanahalli police limits. The victim, Preetham, was a resident of Neeruguntepalya on the outskirts of City. His body was discovered on Sunday morning in a thicket near Kodi Manjanahalli.

According to police, Preetham had been in a relationship with a woman two years his senior, currently pursuing an MBBS degree. The relationship was reportedly disapproved of by the woman's family and relatives, who had recently warned Preetham to stay away from her. Despite their objections, he is believed to have continued contact with her.

Preetham **PHOTO: SALAR**

It is suspected that some of the woman's relatives abducted Preetham in a car, took him to a secluded area, assaulted him, and then murdered him. His body was later dumped in nearby bushes.

A local resident discovered the body on Sunday morning and alerted the Devanahalli police. *—Salar News*

MADIGAS ASKED TO MARK CASTE ACCURATELY IN SURVEY

MYSURU, 4 MAY

Leaders of Madiga community have unanimously appealed to all community members, including pourakarmikas, to identify themselves as "Madiga" in caste column during the upcoming internal reservation survey conducted by Justice HN Nagamohan Das Commission. The survey is set to begin on Monday and will continue until 18 May across State, including the districts of the Old Mysuru region.

A decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of Madiga leaders, chaired by MLC D Thimmaiah at his office in Mysuru on Sunday.

Speaking at the meeting, Thimmaiah said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is committed to implementing internal reservation among Scheduled Castes, and urged all Madigas to clearly identify as such during the door-to-door enumeration process.

The survey, to be conducted by trained enumerators of the Nagamohan Das Commission, will be carried out in three phases starting from 5 May.

Former mayor Narayana also stressed importance of accurate caste identification, urging pourakarmikas in particular to refrain from listing themselves as Adi Dravida or Adi Andhra. *—Salar News*

FREE EDUCATION FOR POOR

KREIS schools bag 71 State ranks in SSLC exam, boasts pass rate of 91%

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Sixteen-year-old Bhumika Suresh Vokkalinga is one among the 34,984 students from State Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) schools who appeared for the SSLC exams this academic year, held between 21 March and 4 April.

Bhumika, who has scored 624 out of 625, is also one among the three second State rank holders from KREIS schools, which saw 71 students secure State ranks, ranging from 2 to 6.

KREIS is an association of residential educational institutions in State that provides free residential education to socially and economically disadvantaged children.

The schools under KREIS – which at present stands at 788 – have consistently outperformed not only government schools but also unaided private schools, said SS Nagesh, Joint Director, KREIS.

This academic year, for instance, KREIS schools boast a pass rate of 91 per cent, 28.66 per cent more than the State average of 62.34 per cent.

> KREIS is an association of residential educational institutions in State that provides free residential education to socially and economically disadvantaged children.

The school targets children like Bhumika, said Nagesh.

Bhumika, who is from a tiny village called Harekoppa in Siddapura taluk in Uttara Kannada district, is the first in her family to have passed SSLC.

Both her parents are labourers who work for daily wages.

Bhumika said it was her village elders who suggested she apply to KREIS school, seeing that she was good at her studies.

"Because it was a residential school, I could devote all my time to studies. Had I been at home, I would have had to chip in with household chores and help my mother in looking after my younger siblings," Bhumika said. *—PTI*

The schools under KREIS have consistently outperformed both government schools and unaided private schools, said SS Nagesh, Joint Director, KREIS **PHOTO: PTI**

3 soldiers die as Army vehicle falls into gorge

RAMBAN, 4 MAY

Three Army personnel, including a junior commissioned officer, died on Sunday when their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged 700 feet into a gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district. The accident occurred around 11.30am near Battery Chashma on National Highway 44, as the Army truck was part of a convoy travelling from Jammu to Srinagar. A joint rescue operation involving the Army, police, SDRF, and local volunteers was launched immediately. Officials confirmed that the bodies of all three soldiers—Sepoy Amit Kumar, Sepoy Sujeet Kumar, and Sepoy Man Bahadur—were found at the scene. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Punjab cops arrest two for leaking defence intel

CHANDIGARH, 4 MAY

In a counter-espionage operation, Punjab police have arrested two individuals for allegedly leaking sensitive information and photographs of army cantonments and air bases in Amritsar. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav stated on Sunday that the Amritsar Rural Police detained Palak Sher Masih and Suraj Masih on Saturday. Preliminary investigations have uncovered their links to Pakistani intelligence, reportedly established through Harpreet Singh, alias Pittu, currently imprisoned in Amritsar Central Jail. A case has been registered under the Official Secrets Act, and further investigations are ongoing. DGP Yadav indicated that more critical revelations are anticipated as the inquiry progresses. The arrests highlight continued efforts by hostile elements to target India's strategic military infrastructure. *—PTI*

1 arrested in UP for 'Pro-Pak' post; 2 more in Assam

ETAH/GUWAHATI, 4 MAY

A man has been sent to jail in Uttar Pradesh's Etah for allegedly posting a comment in support of Pakistan on social media, police said. The accused, Faizan Khan, allegedly wrote "Pakistan Zindabad" (Long Live Pakistan) from one of his social media accounts. Meanwhile, two more individuals were arrested in Assam for allegedly 'defending Pakistan on Indian soil,' bringing the total number of people detained to 39 since the Pahalgam terror attack last month, said Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The latest arrests took place in Hojai and South Salmara-Mankachar districts. On Friday, Sarma threatened to break the legs of those raising 'Pakistan zindabad' slogans following the Jammu and Kashmir attack. *—PTI*

FIR lodged over Manipur 'gun salute'

IMPHAL, 4 MAY

An FIR has been lodged over an alleged 'gun salute' in Manipur's Kangpokpi district, reportedly held to commemorate victims of ethnic violence. The incident took place on Saturday in Saikul, a Kuki-majority area, during a programme marking the second anniversary of the 2023 Meitei-Kuki-Zo conflict. Police recovered five single-barrel guns and camouflage uniforms from the site. Local leaders were summoned, and raids are ongoing to arrest those involved. Authorities stated the organisers will face legal action. Manipur observed a shutdown on 3 May to mark two years of ethnic strife, which has claimed over 260 lives and displaced thousands. The state has been under President's Rule since February 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. *—PTI*

Air Chief Marshal AP Singh meets Modi

India tells ships to be cautious around Arabian Sea; LoC firing continues into 10th day

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the security situation on Sunday, amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan over the Pahalgam terror attack.

The meeting comes less than 24 hours after Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi apprised the Prime Minister on the overall situation in the critical sea lanes of the Arabian Sea.

The Air Chief held a meeting with Modi, sources said. There is no official word on the Modi-Singh meeting yet.

Meanwhile, India's maritime authorities issued a navigation warning for commercial ships to exercise caution in view of the Indian Navy's ongoing drills in the Arabian Sea.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and IAF Chief Marshal AP Singh *PHOTO: PTI*

Sources said the navigation warning alert has been issued by India's National Hydrographic Office that operates under the Indian Navy.

Commercial vessels have been advised to avoid the area to ensure safety, they said.

Pakistan has already put in place its naval warnings as its Navy has ramped up its manoeuvring in the critical sea lanes.

The Pakistan Navy has been carrying out intense drills and live firings in the Arabian Sea for the last few days.

Meanwhile, both armies continued to trade small arm firing for the tenth consecutive night in different sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. *—PTI*

- India's National Hydrographic Office issued a navigation warning for commercial ships to exercise caution in view of the Indian Navy's ongoing drills in the Arabian Sea. Pakistan's Navy too has been carrying out similar drills and live firings in the Arabian Sea over the past few days

Body found in river, Mehbooba says 'foul play'

SRINAGAR, 4 MAY

Residents of a village in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir recovered the body of a youth on Sunday amid allegations that the deceased was picked by security forces for questioning in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack.

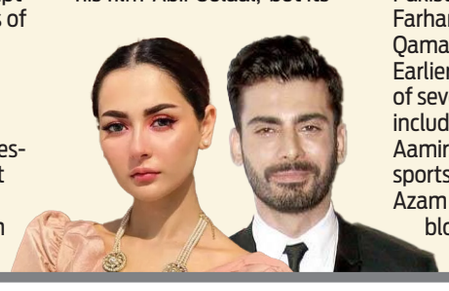
PDP President Mehbooba Mufti said there were allegations of foul play in the death of Imtiyaz Ahmad Magray whose body was fished out from the Adbal stream.

"Yet another body has been recovered from a river in Kulgam raising serious allegations of foul play. Local residents allege that Imtiyaz Magray was picked up by the army two days ago and now mysteriously his body has surfaced in the river," Mehbooba said on X. "If a single act of violence can shake the entire system, triggering arbitrary arrests, home demolitions, and the targeting of innocent civilians then the perpetrators have already achieved their objective," she said. *—PTI*

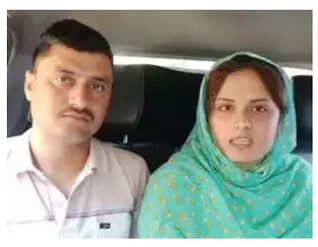
Several Pakistani celebs' Instagram accounts blocked

New Delhi

Instagram accounts of several prominent Pakistani celebrities have been blocked in India. Users in India attempting to access the accounts of popular figures such as Fawad Khan, Atif Aslam, Mawra Hocane, and the esteemed singer Abida Parveen encountered a message stating, "Account not available in India. This is because we complied with a legal request to restrict this content." Fawad Khan was poised to return to Bollywood after nearly nine years with his film 'Abir Gulaal,' but its release now hangs in the balance due to the recent developments. The crackdown also affects other notable Pakistani stars, including Farhan Saeed, Ali Sethi, Saba Qamar, and Adnan Siddiqui. Earlier, social media handles of several other celebrities, including Mahira Khan, Hania Aamir, and Ali Zafar, and sportspersons, like Babar Azam and Wasim Akram were blocked as well. *-PTI*



Dismissed trooper says CRPF approved marriage with Pak national



Ex-CRFP trooper Munir Ahmed and wife Minal Khan *PHOTO: X*

JAMMU, 4 MAY

A day after being dismissed from service for allegedly concealing his marriage with a Pakistani woman, CRPF trooper Munir Ahmed on Sunday said he married his cousin nearly a month after getting permission from the force's headquarters last year.

Ahmed, a resident of Jammu's Gharotra area, said he will challenge his dismissal in court.

He also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the CRPF to relook into his case, claiming he "completed all the formalities as per the rules and had done no wrong."

CRPF has dismissed Ahmed for "concealing" his marriage with Pakistani woman Minal Khan. *—PTI*

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose meets the families affected by the Murshidabad violence at a shelter home *PHOTO: ANI*

Haryana, Punjab spar over water sharing

CHANDIGARH, 4 MAY

Amid the stand-off between Punjab and Haryana over water sharing, Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala on Sunday questioned Centre's silence over the issue and asked it to instruct the Punjab government not to create any obstructions in the allocation of Haryana's water.

Surjewala, a Congress leader from Haryana, also referred to the alleged deployment of Punjab police personnel at the Bhakra headworks, claiming that it was obstructing the release of water to Haryana, and demanded that the Centre should get it freed from "illegal occupation".

He demanded that the Modi government hand over the security of the Bhakra-Nangal Dam project to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

However, Punjab minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal on Sunday said the AAP government will not allow release of water to Haryana. He also attacked the BJP-led Centre and Haryana government for trying to "plunder" it.

His statement came a day after an all-party meeting in Haryana asked the Punjab government to unconditionally release water.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini had hit out at the AAP government, saying not following the Bhakra Beas Management Board's direction to release water was "unconstitutional, inhuman" and an attack on the federalism. *—PTI*

Bengal Guv blames 'radicalisation' for Waqf riots

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose submitted a report on the recent riots in Murshidabad district to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, saying the "twin spectre of radicalisation and militancy" is a serious challenge.

In his report, he suggested a slew of measures, including setting up an inquiry commission and outposts of central forces in districts bordering Bangladesh, besides writing, "needless to add, the provisions under Article 356 of the Constitution also remain".

Asked about the mention of "the provisions under Article 356 of the Constitution", which refers to imposing President's rule, an official later told PTI, "The Governor has not proposed for implementation of Article 356. He meant to say that the provisions are open to the Centre if the situation further deteriorates."

"The twin spectre of radicalisation and militancy poses a serious challenge, especially in two of the several districts sharing an international border with Bangladesh, viz., Murshidabad and Malda. In both these districts, there is an adverse demographic composition with Hindus being minorities," Bose wrote.

Of late, there are "indications of radicalisation and polarisation", he said.

"The divisions are so deep that even in the face of escalation of violence, the Chief Minister's undertaking that she would protect minority interests, and that the (Waqf) Act would not be implemented in the state have done little to assuage the Muslim community," Bose added. *—PTI*

Will take responsibility for party's blotted history: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Responding to a question on 1984 riots and the Congress' relationship with the Sikh community, Rahul Gandhi said that he was happy to responsibility for the party's past mistakes.

Gandhi made these remarks during an interactive session at The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University in US on 21 April.

"A lot of mistakes happened when I was not there, but I am more than happy to take responsibility for everything the party has done wrong in its history," Gandhi said. "I have publicly stated that what happened in the 80s was wrong. I have an extremely good relationship with the Sikh community in India,"

Meanwhile, communications head Jairam Ramesh on Sunday asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi will acknowledge the BJP's change in policy regarding caste census and commit to a timeline for the survey.

"On 20 July, 2021, the Modi government told Parliament that it had 'decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population other than SCs and STs in the Census'," Ramesh said. "In fact, the Modi government explicitly urged the Supreme Court not to order a caste census for the OBCs."

Modi had in 2024 branded all those demanding a caste census "urban naxals." *—PTI*

In a speech made during his visit to the US, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the 1984 anti-sikh riots were a stain on the party *PHOTO: ANI*

Delhi CM calls Sanskrit 'scientific language'

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta claimed that Sanskrit is a "scientific" language, asserting that even NASA has recognised its merit. Speaking at the conclusion of a 10-day Sanskrit learning initiative, Gupta stated, "Even NASA scientists have written papers on Sanskrit, confirming it is a scientific language. Coding can be done in Sanskrit; it is the most computer-friendly language."

Her comments appear to reference a 1985 paper by NASA researcher Rick Briggs, who explored the potential of Sanskrit in artificial intelligence. However, Gupta's claims were met with scepticism due to the lack of substantial evidence. *—PTI*

CONVERTEES TO BE DELISTED

New, stricter law against religious conversion soon in Chh'garh, says CM

Vishnu Deo Sai *PHOTO: PTI*

RAIPUR, 4 MAY

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Sunday announced that his government will introduce a new stringent law to prevent religious conversion of tribal people, and possibly others.

In an interview to PTI Videos, Sai also advocated for the delisting of tribals if they convert to another region saying it will prevent proselytisation.

Sai said, "There is an existing law in Chhattisgarh against illegal religious conversion. There is a need to strengthen it further. We are examining what kind of law is there in other states. In the coming time, we will definitely introduce a strict law so that religious conversion can be stopped."

> **Industries will be set up in Bastar after consulting locals. It will not be done forcefully. It is there in the industry policy that industries are set up after holding public hearings.**
>
> -Vishnu Deo Sai, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister

"Some have been converting people, particularly the poor, by luring and misleading them on the pretext of providing education and other facilities. I think it is wrong and should not happen. It will stop with delisting," he said.

He did not say when it would be introduced in the Assembly.

"There is a provision in the Constitution that if the people of Scheduled Caste (SC) convert to other religion, then they are deprived of the benefits given under the category concerned. But this is not the case with Scheduled Tribes (ST). If a tribal converts to another religion, they continue to get the benefits given to the ST community and even those given to minorities," he said.

Sai also said that the Bastar region will become a tourist hub in the next 10 years, once his government wipes out Naxals. The government will focus on developing the resource-rich region through minor forest produce processing industries, animal husbandry, and tourism, he said. *—PTI*

EPS says BJP did not intimidate party into alliance

CHENNAI, 4 MAY

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami has asserted that his party is undeterred by the BJP-led government at the Centre, confidently forming an alliance for the upcoming 2026 Assembly elections. He stated that the AIADMK has no reason to fear scrutiny from Central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Income Tax Department. In contrast, Palaniswami claimed that DMK ministers are anxious about potential investigations due to their alleged involvement in financial misconduct.

During a public address, Palaniswami also critiqued Chief Minister MK Stalin's comments regarding press freedom under the BJP administration, labelling them hypocritical in light of the state government's treatment of critics, specifically referencing the case of YouTuber Savukku Shankar.

The AIADMK leader dismissed any internal factionalism, emphasising the party's commitment to public welfare. His statements were in response to the DMK's accusations of the Central government misusing its agencies to coerce the AIADMK into their alliance. Stalin condemned this alleged misuse of power, asserting that it reflects the declining state of press freedom in India, which has reportedly dropped to 151 in the Global Press Freedom Index. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Bhopal college rape accused faces murder charge

BHOPAL, 4 MAY

Farhan Ali, the primary suspect in the alleged rape of female students from a Bhopal college, has been charged with attempted murder for allegedly attacking police personnel. The incident occurred on Friday night when Ali, seeking to escape police custody, reportedly attempted to snatch a sub-inspector's firearm, resulting in a bullet injury to his leg during the ensuing struggle. A separate First Information Report has been filed against him under section 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at Ratibad police station. Five individuals, including Ali, have been arrested for their involvement in the rapes and subsequent blackmail of the victims, having filmed the assaults. *—PTI*

Series of road accidents claim five lives in Andhra

ONGOLE,4 MAY

A sequence of road accidents on National Highway 16 near Ongole resulted in the deaths of five individuals and left eight others with serious injuries on Sunday morning, according to local police reports. The first incident occurred around 4.50am when a truck, parked on Lane 1 due to a flat tyre, was struck from behind by a poultry transport vehicle, killing the driver and two crew members. This initial crash caused traffic congestion that extended over a kilometre. Shortly thereafter, a harvester collided with the poultry vehicle, injuring four people. As the pile-up escalated, a car carrying six passengers from Guntur was crushed between two trucks. Tragically, two occupants perished at the scene while four others sustained severe injuries. *—PTI*

Palghar man arrested for Shivaji remarks

PALGHAR, 4 MAY

A man has been beaten up by locals and arrested in Maharashtra's Palghar district for allegedly making objectionable remarks against Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on a WhatsApp group. The accused allegedly made derogatory statements about Shivaji Maharaj during a heated discussion about Gujarati and Marathi identities on a WhatsApp group. Outraged by the remarks, a group of residents allegedly confronted Visawadiya and assaulted him in Vijay Nagar area of Nalasopara East on 28 April before handing him over to the police. A video of the man being thrashed also surfaced on social media. The police registered an FIR against Visawadiya under different sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—PTI*

2 Palghar concrete plant workers die of suffocation

PALGHAR, 4 MAY

Two labourers have died of suffocation after falling into a pit at a concrete plant in Sasupada in Maharashtra's Palghar district. The victims, Vishwajeet Harishchandra Rajbhar, 20 and Rajan Surendra Rajbhar, 24, fell into a 30-foot-deep pit containing some residual chemical or concrete material and started suffocating. Another worker, Salman Khan, entered the pit to rescue the duo, but began suffocating too. They were eventually pulled out. Vishwajeet and Rajan were rushed in an unconscious condition to a local hospital, where doctors declared them dead. Khan suffered severe respiratory distress and is being treated. The police are investigation into possible negligence by the plant owner or management regarding safety measures and protocols. The police registered an accidental death report. *—PTI*

'We don't look for preachers who don't practise at home'

Jaishankar raps Europe, asks them to display sensitivity

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaks at the Arctic Circle India Forum 2025 **PHOTO: PTI**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that New Delhi is looking for partners and not "preachers". Europe must display some sensitivity and show mutual interest for deeper ties with India, he remarked.

In a session on Sunday, Jaishankar said India always advocated for "Russia realism". He criticised earlier attempts by the West to find a solution to the Russia–Ukraine conflict without involving Russia, saying it "challenged the basics of realism".

"Just like I am an advocate of Russia realism, I am also an advocate of America realism," he said at the 'Arctic Circle India Forum'.

"We look for partners; we do not look for preachers, particularly preachers who do not practise at home and preach abroad," Jaishankar said.

"I think some of Europe is still struggling with that problem. Some of it has changed," he said, adding, that Europe "entered a certain zone of reality check".

"Now whether they are able to step up to it or not, we will have to see," he said.

"If we are to develop a partnership, there has to be some understanding, there has to be some sensitivity, there has to be a mutuality of interest," he noted. "The best way to engage today's America is also through finding mutuality of interests rather than putting ideological differences upfront and then allowing it to cloud the possibilities of working together."

On India-Russia ties, he said there is an "important fit and complimentarily" between the two countries as a "resource provider and resource consumer".

"Where Russia is concerned, we have always taken a view that there is a Russia realism that we have advocated."

"When passions were very high (in) 2022, 2023..if one looks back at that period, the kind of predictions and scenarios which were put forward have turned out not to be well founded," he said. *—PTI*

Police personnel inspect the site after a stampede at a village in North Goa district during a temple festival **PHOTO: PTI**

Stampede in Goa temple a repeat event, says report

PANAJI, 4 MAY

A committee probing the stampede at a temple festival in North Goa found that a similar incident on a minor scale occurred at the same event, and the spot was accident-prone, a senior official said on Sunday.

Six persons were killed, and more than 70 sustained injuries in the stampede that occurred when thousands of devotees thronged the narrow lanes leading to the temple of Goddess Sree Lairai Devi in Shirgaon village for an annual festival in the early hours of Saturday.

The official said the fact-finding committee, constituted by the government, recorded statements of senior police and district officials in charge of crowd management at the event.

"We gathered that a similar incident, but on a minor scale, had happened during the temple festival last year at the same spot," he said. The official said the committee will also examine why precautions were not taken to prevent the incident.

Despite the lanes leading to the temple being narrow, the temple committee had allowed shops to be set up on the route, adding to congestion, the official said.

He said the committee is also investigating whether a fight between two groups of pilgrims triggered the stampede.

Goa Medical College and Hospital's medical superintendent Dr Rajesh Patil, meanwhile, said three out of the five persons who were seriously injured in the stampede were showing signs of improvement on Sunday.

A total of 14 patients were admitted and only one has been discharged so far, he told PTI.

Importantly, the condition of none of the critical patients has worsened, said Dr Patil.

While rituals continued at the temple, the temple has committee appealed to people to refrain from visiting the area. *—PTI*

Three killed as state hospital roof collapses in Jharkhand

Rescue operation underway after the roof of a hospital collapsed in Jamshedpur **PHOTO: PTI**

JAMSHEDPUR, 4 MAY

The death toll from the collapse of a state-run hospital corridor in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district has risen to three after the recovery of another body, officials reported on Sunday. Two others injured in the incident are currently receiving treatment.

Jharkhand's Health Minister, Irfan Ansari, confirmed that the fatalities resulted from the collapse, which occurred around 4pm on Saturday in the second-floor corridor of MGM Hospital's medicine department in Jamshedpur's Sakchi area.

MGM Hospital Superintendent Nakul Choudhary stated that two individuals sustained injuries, with one elderly woman in critical condition being referred to Tata Main Hospital for urgent care. Rescuers saved twelve people from the rubble, all of whom received immediate medical assistance, according to East Singhbhum Deputy Commissioner, Ananya Mittal.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren has ordered a thorough investigation into the cause of the collapse, with a committee tasked to submit its findings within 48 hours.

"NDRF and local authorities are engaged in rescue efforts. Strict action will be taken against those responsible within a week," Ansari announced on social media.

The state has pledged compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the families of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for each injured individual. *—PTI*

Domestic violence, assault most reported crimes

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The National Commission for Women (NCW) received 7,698 complaints this year, with domestic violence, assault, and criminal intimidation the most common grievances across India.

Domestic violence topped the chart with a total of 1,594 complaints filed since the beginning of the year.

The total comprised 367 cases in January, 390 in February, 513 in March, 322 in April, and two in May. The category alone accounted for nearly 20 per cent of all complaints, according to official data.

Closely following were complaints of criminal intimidation, which saw 989 cases over the three months. Assault was the third most commonly reported issue, with 950 complaints.

Other significant categories included dowry harassment with 916 complaints, rape and attempt to rape with 394, and molestation or outraging the modesty of women, with 310 complaints. Sexual harassment drew 302 complaints, while cybercrimes against women accounted for 110 cases. *—PTI*

KERALA LITERACY CAMPAIGN HERO RABIYA PASSES AWAY

MALAPPURAM, 4 MAY

KV Rabiya, a distinguished social worker renowned for her pivotal role in Kerala's literacy campaign, has died in a local hospital following a brief illness. She was 59 years old. Rabiya, who was diagnosed with polio at 14, faced significant challenges and continued her education from a wheelchair.

In 1992, she initiated an adult literacy campaign in Tirurangadi, inspiring countless individuals of all ages to learn to read and write. Rabiya founded the volunteer organisation 'Chalanam' (Motion), focusing on adult education, health awareness, and the rehabilitation of the physically disabled.

Despite being diagnosed with cancer in 2002, Rabiya bravely resumed her activism after chemotherapy, authoring books. *—PTI*

Padma Shri guru Baba Sivanand dies in Varanasi

VARANASI, 4 MAY

Baba Sivanand, a Padma Shri-awarded spiritual guru, has passed away at BHU Hospital due to health complications. His followers claim he was 128 years old. Admitted on 30 April, Sivanand's death occurred late Saturday night, with his body now at his residence for public homage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences via social media, stating Sivanand's contributions to yoga and spirituality served as inspiration for many. He referred to the guru's passing as an "irreparable loss" and acknowledged his dedication to yoga and sadhana throughout his life.

Recognised for his contributions to yoga and spirituality, Baba Sivanand was conferred with the Padma Shri in 2022. His followers said he would rise at 3am everyday to practice yoga. *—PTI*

ASPIRATIONS DERAILED

NEET aspirant commits suicide; 3 held for duping another student

JAIPUR, 4 MAY

A NEET aspirant allegedly died by suicide by hanging herself in her room at home in Kota on Saturday.

The victim was a minor and hailed from Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh. She resided with her parents in Kota and was preparing for NEET-UG.

No suicide note was recovered from her room, police said, adding the body has been sent for postmortem.

This is the 14th case of suicide by a coaching student in Kota in 2025.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan police have detained three men for allegedly duping a National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) candidate of Rs 40 lakh by promising him the question paper.

The accused, Balwan, 27, Mukesh Meena, 40, and Hardas, 38, allegedly took the student and his family members to Gurugram on 2 May and demanded the money. The family asked them to show the paper.

When they refused, they contacted the police, who later apprehended the trio.

NEET-UG is underway on Sunday to select candidates for admissions in medical colleges across India. *—PTI*

IIT-K student dies by suicide

KOLKATA, 4 MAY

A BTech student of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur was found hanging in his hostel room on Sunday. Police believe it

The victim, Mohammad Asif Qamar was a third-year student of the civil engineering department and hailed from Bihar's Seohar district. The college has seen several suicides. On 20 April Aniket Walkar, student of Ocean Engineering was found hanging in his hostel room. *—PTI*

GREEN CHEMISTRY

IIT brains make fuel from wastewater

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The team designed a waste-to-energy system that uses both harvested algae and sewage sludge to produce biocrude oil **PHOTO: IIT/WEB**

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati developed innovative microalgal biorefinery models that turn wastewater into clean energy, according to officials.

The project combines large-scale reactor systems, advanced sustainable thermochemical conversion processes and green chemistry to produce biofuels while treating domestic and industrial wastewater.

The team genetically sequenced over 10 native microalgal strains removing up to 85 percent of pollutants from wastewater.

"To make the process efficient and cost-effective, we built large-scale photobioreactors that maximise algal growth. The team also designed a waste-to-energy system that uses both harvested algae and sewage sludge to produce biocrude oil, a petroleum-like fuel," said Kaustubha Mohanty, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering.

"This is a proof-of-concept work, where we have demonstrated that how microalgae can bioremediate wastewater as well as produce biofuels under a biorefinery and circular bio-economy approach. We have also developed various processes where all the solid and liquid wastes that are generated under biorefinery get re-cycled, re-used and valorised to biofuels. Now, we are planning to scale-up the work," he added.

The research published in journal 'Energy Conversion and Management' yielded a remarkable 40 per cent biocrude, comprising petrol, kerosene, diesel, and industrial fuel.

"Based on the theoretical mass balance and scaled up using 1 million litres of domestic sewage, over 2400 kg algal biomass (along with 622 kg of sludge), 99 kg petrol, 266 kg diesel and 234 kg kerosene, besides other things can be obtained," Sanjeev Mishra, who was a PhD scholar at IIT Guwahati and now a scientist at SSS-NIBE, Kapurthala, said.

"To enhance sustainability, the team developed methods to reuse solid residues and liquid by-products," he said . *—PTI*

Stubble burning kills 1 in MP, guts 2 villages

CHHATARPUR, 4 MAY

A devastating fire ignited during stubble-burning has swept through two villages in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh, resulting in the death of a 65-year-old woman and significant property damage. The incident occurred in the Ramtoriya village panchayat area on Saturday evening.

According to Sub Divisional Magistrate Ayush Jain, the fire rapidly spread from stubble burning to Chhulla and Majra Chirola villages. Approximately 40 houses were affected, with around 30 in Majra Chirola and 10-15 in Chhulla damaged. Tragically, Gulab Bai Yadav succumbed to burn injuries, while two children sustained injuries but are reported to be out of danger.

The swift response of three fire engines managed to contain the blaze after about four hours. Tehsildar Kapil Sharma attributed the fire's rapid spread to strong winds. Villager Ram Swaroop Yadav reported destruction of stored wheat and farming equipment in several homes. Officials are now assessing the full extent of the damage caused by this unfortunate incident. *—PTI*

PANAMA FESTIVAL

Revellers perform at the Devils and Congos Festival in Portobelo, Panama. The festival is a cultural celebration depicting the historic struggle between good and evil. The 'Congo' represent self-liberated Black slaves, while the 'Diablos' symbolise the colonising enslavers. The festival is held annually in the provinces of Colón and Darién ***PHOTO: PTI***

Free speech in Mumbai feels the censor heat

Mumbai, the hub of India's performance and entertainment industry, is arguably also the country's most liberal city. But even here, the battle over free speech is being felt.

Aditi Mittal, one of the first female stand-up comedians in India, always consults her lawyer and her mother about her acts to try to keep in step with the country's censors and authorities.

"If they want to come after you, they will come after you for whatever reason. You could be like, 'oh I like potatoes,' and the next day the anti-potato association is standing at your doorstep," she told DW.

While Mittal's statement has a hint of humor, it is particularly pertinent. Just a month ago, fellow comedian Kunal Kamra was targeted for his political satire.

In his act, he criticised Maharashtra's Deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde, which resulted in a mob attack and the subsequent closure of the performance venue.

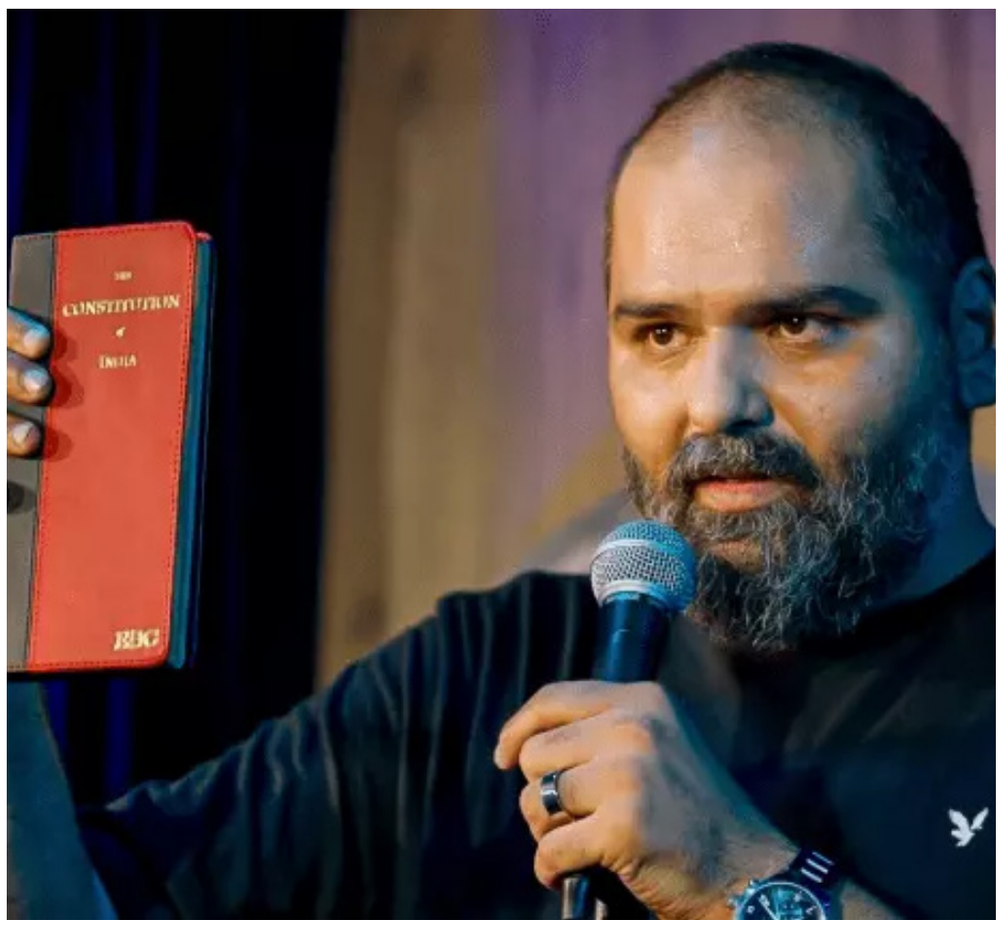
A report was also filed against the comedian and audience members were even summoned for questioning by the police.

Shinde is the leader of a breakaway faction of Maharashtra's Right-wing Shiv Sena party, which currently rules the state after forming an alliance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP.

The Shiv Sena and the BJP did not respond to email queries from DW for this story.

Asked if it will be harder to find venues willing to host comedy performances, Mittal said, "the Mumbai police has to answer this. Are they capable of protecting the city they are in charge of? Then I am sure it will not be a problem. But I am sure that is a question for Mumbai police."

It's not just comedians who are in hot water: the release of a recent film in Mumbai called Phule was delayed due to objections raised by three Brahmin groups, who said it portrayed Brahmins unfavorably.



Comedian Kunal Kamra was targeted for his political satire. In his act, he criticised Maharashtra DyCM Eknath Shinde ***PHOTO: PTI***

Under the Hindu caste system, Brahmans are at the top of the social hierarchy followed by other castes, with Dalits — also known as "untouchables" — at the bottom.

Mumbai is not only home to the billion-dollar Bollywood, television and OTT platform industries, but also to independent artists, entertainers, filmmakers and other creatives.

With dozens of performance venues and creative spaces across the city, it is a hub for India's entertainment sector.

Observers of India's financial capital say artists and the media have been targeted by opponents and censors for many years.

But these attacks have become state-sponsored since the ruling BJP came to power in 2014, writer and political analyst Raju Parulekar told DW.

"Any authoritarian regime is afraid that the truths hidden by them will be exposed by artists. They might clamp down on the media but if an artist exposes the truth in a different way, they feel their weakness is exposed," he added.

Attacks on artists and creatives are nothing new in India. In 2021, comedian Munawar Faruqui was arrested in the city of Indore, about 661kms from the capital Delhi. He spent nearly a month in prison for allegedly hurting religious sentiments by making fun of Hindu Gods before he had even performed.

In 2017, popular radio personality Malishka was sent a notice by Mumbai's Municipal Corporation for making a satirical song about potholes on the roads of Mumbai.

India has plummeted in free speech indices over the years. A study by the US think tank The Future of Free Speech placed India 24th among 33 nations, between South Africa and Lebanon.

Mumbai-based lawyer Anamika Jha noticed that

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Why is 4 May celebrated as Star Wars Day?

It didn't begin a long time ago or in a galaxy far far away, but every 4 May it feels like images, memes and promotional deals involving "Star Wars" have an inescapable gravity.

4 May or May the 4th, as fans say — has evolved over the years into Star Wars Day, an informal holiday celebrating the space epic and its surrounding franchise.

What is Star Wars Day?

Star Wars Day was created by fans as a sly nod to one of the films' mos popular catchphrases, 'May the force be with you.' Get it? Good, now May the 4th be with you too.

It's not an official holiday but has become so well-known that even former President Joe Biden marked it last year when "Star Wars" actor Mark Hamill dropped by the White House a day beforehand.

"I think it's a very clever way for fans to celebrate their passion and love for Star Wars' once a year," said Steve Sansweet, founder and executive chairman of Rancho Obi-Wan, a nonprofit museum in California that has the world's largest collection of "Star Wars" memorabilia.

How did it begin?

The phrase 'May the 4th be with you' was used by fans in the years after the first film was released in 1977, and even appeared in a British political ad in 1979 celebrating Margaret Thatcher's victory as prime minister on 4 May that year.

For some fans, the official Star Wars Day comes on 25 May, the date of the first film's release. The Los Angeles City Council even declared the date to be Star Wars Day in 2007, although the California Legislature voted in 2019 to designate 4 May as Star Wars Day.

How has it spread?

May the 4th caught on informally among fans through inside jokes shared on social media and viewings of the films to mark the occasion. Businesses eventually joined in on the fun, with brands ranging from Nissan to Jameson Whiskey running ads or posting on social media about it.

Disney, which acquired Lucasfilm in 2012, embraced the day as a way to further promote the franchise with merchandise, special screenings and other events surrounding the brand.

Not all "Star Wars" fans are enthused about how ubiquitous the once-underground joke has become. Chris Taylor, a senior editor at Mashable and author of "How Star Wars Conquered the Universe," lables himself a "May the 4th grinch" in part because of its commercialisation.

"I love a good dad joke as much as anyone, but my God you can take it too far," Taylor said.

How is it being celebrated this year?

The day is being celebrated on a large and small scale this year. Disney+ is launching the new series "Star Wars: Tales of the Underworld" on the date, and it comes as the second season gets underway for another franchise series, "Andor."

It also follows the announcement that a new stand-alone "Star Wars" film installment starring Ryan Gosling will be released in 2027.

Disney marks the day with the launch of new "Star Wars" merchandise, ranging from lightsaber sets to jewelry.

Most Major League Baseball teams have marked the day in recent years with special events incorporating "Star Wars" characters. For example, the San Francisco Giants sold special tickets for Saturday's game that included a bobblehead portraying pitcher Logan Webb as "Obi-Webb Kenobi."

It's hard to find a place where May the 4th celebrations aren't occurring, from bakeries serving cookies with a "Star Wars" theme to concerts featuring the memorable scores of the films.

It's a town-wide celebration in New Hope, Pennsylvania, which shares its name with the subtitle of the first "Star Wars" film. The town of about 2,600 people, located 50kms northeast of Philadelphia, plans to have costumed characters throughout town with restaurants serving themed items like a "YodaRita."

"I would always joke around and wish people May the 4th' — but taking it to this level, I've definitely upped my Star Wars' nerdiness," said Michael Sklar, president of the Greater New Hope Chamber of Commerce. —PTI

The phrase "May the 4th be with you" was used by fans in the years after the first film was released in 1977 ***PHOTO: PTI***

Donald Trump's trade tariffs are a threat to global food security

The US currently imports around 16 per cent of its food supply, with a large proportion of its fruit and vegetables coming from countries now hit by tariffs.

Mexico stands out. It supplies over half the fresh fruit and nearly 70 per cent of the fresh vegetables consumed in the US.

And even when it comes to home grown produce, the US still depends on imported fertiliser for its crops, with Canada providing up to 85 per cent of its neighbour's supply.

So grocery bills for American families, especially for fresh produce will get higher. But there will also be a noticeable effect on food prices outside the US.

The consequences could be particularly serious for developing economies that rely on stable international prices to secure affordable food imports.

Research I conducted with a colleague found that when international prices are disturbed, local food prices, especially in developing countries, go up.

Take global maize prices, which this year rose by 7 pe cent between 2 April and 11 April. Our study suggests this will immediately lead to a similar increase in local maize prices in places like sub-Saharan Africa.

This is where many of the world's poorest people live, with hundreds of millions in households earning below the World Bank's poverty line of USD 2.15 per day. When much of that income is spent on food, a 7 per cent increase in the price of maize could be devastating.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The US still depends on imported fertiliser for its crops, with Canada providing up to 85 per cent of its neighbour's supply ***PHOTO: PTI***

According to another study, tariffs on agricultural products such as fertiliser will increase global production costs, potentially lowering crop yields and worsening food insecurity.

While the US has reduced tariffs on Canadian potash from 25 per cent to 10 per cent, other fertiliser producers face steeper.

And when the cost of farming rises, crop production can suffer. This could significantly weaken food production in developing countries that are already battling climate change and volatile markets.

Another study I conducted found that countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia – already struggling with food insecurity – are among the most vulnerable to local food price shocks. These economies depend heavily on food imports and face high exposure to currency fluctuations and transport costs.

If the trade war escalates, farmers in these regions may be forced to abandon staple crops for cash commodities such as cocoa or coffee, deepening their reliance on volatile global markets and reducing their food self-sufficiency. Global inequality will worsen unless things change.

One option would be to protect essential agricultural imports, especially fertilisers and staple foods, from punitive tariffs. This would stabilise prices and protect vulnerable economies. The recently announced 90-day pause for negotiations offers a glimmer of hope, but it must be used wisely to build a more equitable trading system.

In the long term, developing countries need to bolster the resilience of their food systems. My research recommends investing heavily in mechanised agriculture which is resilient to climate change, incentivising farmers with government support, and strengthening regional trade.

The global food system is heavily interconnected. Decisions made in Washington can quickly affect food prices in Lagos, Cairo and New Delhi. And if tariffs go unchecked, they may unleash. — ***PTI***

PHOTO: X @AymanMatNews

SUV crashes into Manila airport entrance, kills 2

MANILA, 4 MAY

A vehicle crashed into an entrance at Manila's Niniy Aquino International airport on Sunday morning, leaving 2 dead including a 4-year-old girl, according to the Philippine Red Cross. The other victim was an adult male, the humanitarian group said in a statement. Other people were injured in the incident and the driver of the vehicle was taken into police custody, according to the airport's operator, New NAIA Infra Co, and the Red Cross. Dozens of emergency personnel could be seen at Ninoy Aquino International Airport surrounding a black SUV that had rammed into a wall by an entrance. The vehicle was later removed from the site. The airport operator said it is coordinating with the authorities to investigate the incident. *—PTI*

Xi to attend Victory Day Parade in Moscow on 9 May

MOSCOW, 4 MAY

Chinese leader Xi Jinping will pay an official visit to Russia from 7–10 May, the Kremlin confirmed on Sunday. Xi was already among the leaders set to attend the Victory Day Parade in Moscow on 9 May. The Kremlin said Xi was visiting at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin and, as well as taking part in Victory Day celebrations, the leaders would discuss "further development of relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction" and "issues on the international and regional agenda." Putin and Xi will sign a number of bilateral documents, it said. Xi's visit to Russia will be his third since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. *—PTI*

Turkish Opposition leader Ozgur Ozel attacked

ISTANBUL, 4 MAY

The leader of Turkey's main opposition party was attacked as he left a memorial ceremony in Istanbul on Sunday raising fears of safety of opposition political leaders in the country. Ozgur Ozel, who heads the Republican People's Party, or CHP, was leaving the Ataturk Cultural Center in the city center when a white-haired man approached him and struck him in the face with an open hand, televised footage showed. The suspect was detained, the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office said. Ozel, who was attending a memorial for Sirri Sureyya Onder, a pro-Kurdish politician who died Saturday, was said to be unhurt. *—PTI*

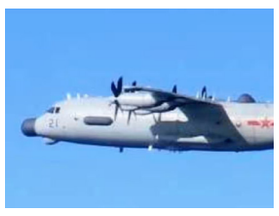


PHOTO: ©Japan Ministry of Defense/Kyodo

Japan, China trade barbs on airspace breach

TOKYO, 4 MAY

Japan and China accused each other of violating the airspace around the disputed Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands. Japan's Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that it has protested to Beijing after a Chinese helicopter that took off from one of China's 4 coast guard boats had entered Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku island, violating the Japanese airspace around them for about 15 minutes on Saturday. In response to the intrusion, Japan's Self-Defence Force scrambled fighter jets, the Defence Ministry said. China routinely sends coast guard vessels and aircraft into waters and airspace near the islands and force Japan to scramble jets in response. *—PTI*

Houthi missile hits Israel's airport

Israel to decide on expanding Gaza war

BEN-GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 4 MAY

Hours ahead of Israeli top cabinet meet could convene to decide on Gaza war expansion, a missile launched by Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen on Sunday landed at Israel's main international airport leaving at least 4 wounded.

The missile launch set off air raid sirens in multiple parts of Israel. A plume of smoke was visible at the airport, according to footage shared by Israeli media. Passengers were heard yelling and scrambling for cover briefly halting flights and commuter traffic.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz vowed retribution for the airport attack. "Whoever harms us, we will harm them sevenfold." he said.

Earlier, far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, in an interview with Israeli Army Radio, said he wanted to see a "powerful" expansion of the war, for 'total victory'. He demanded that Israel bomb "the food and electricity supplies" in Gaza.

The missile, reportedly launched from Yemen towards Israel, found its target at Ben Gurion Airport *PHOTO: X @HURRIYATEN*

> **Whoever harms us, we will harm them sevenfold**
>
> - Israel Katz, Israel Defence minister

An Israeli official said the influential security Cabinet would meet on Sunday evening to vote on plans to expand the fighting. A military official said the country was calling up thousands of reserves. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israel in early March halted the entry of goods into Gaza, plunging the territory of 2.3 million people into the worst humanitarian crisis since the war began 18 months back.

Houthi rebels who have accepted responsibility for the attack, have been firing at Israel since the war with Gaza started, some have penetrated Israel's missile defence systems, causing damage.

Israel has struck back against the Yemeni rebels and US, Israel's top ally, also launched strikes in March against them. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

PAP's Wong retains power in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 4 MAY

In an election held amid global economic uncertainties, the People's Action Party (PAP) returned to government in a stunning victory by winning 87 out of 97 seats, with Prime Minister Lawernce Wong securing a strong mandate.

Singaporeans at the ballot box on 3 May chose political stability and economic safety over the opposition's calls for greater checks and balances, reported Channel News Asia.

In all, 65.57 per cent of the 2,386,452 valid votes cast went to the PAP – up from 61.24 per cent in the 2020 General Election – in what was PM Wong's first electoral test leading the ruling party.

The PAP, Singapore's oldest and largest political party, has ruled the city-state ever since independence in 1965.

Wong said that Singaporeans have given the party that has ruled the prosperous city state a "clear and strong mandate to govern".

Reiterating that the bigger contest is not between political parties but between Singapore and the challenges it faces, Wong noted that the election took place at a critical time for the country, as the world faces an economic slowdown as well as fundamental shifts in the international order.

"The results will put Singapore in a better position to face this turbulent world. It's a clear signal of trust, stability and confidence in us,"

Many arrested in London over Iranian terror plot

LONDON, 4 MAY

British counterterrorism officers have arrested five men in connection with an alleged plot to attack an unspecified target in London, the Metropolitan Police announced on Sunday. The arrests, made on Saturday, involve men aged between 29 and 46, four of whom are Iranian citizens, while the nationality of the fifth is still being confirmed.

Authorities are questioning the suspects and have initiated searches at multiple properties in London, Manchester, and Swindon. The specific target of the alleged plot remains undisclosed for operational reasons.

Commander Dominic Murphy of the Counter Terrorism Command stated that efforts are ongoing to ascertain the motive behind the plot and to evaluate any potential risks to the public.

Meanwhile, 3 other Iranian men, aged 39, 44, and 55, were arrested in London as part of an unrelated national security investigation. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper remarked that these incidents highlight the need for continued vigilance against national security threats.

Britain's domestic intelligence service, MI5, has warned of an increasing threat from Iranian-linked attackers, since 2022. *—PTI*

US visa crackdown rattles international students

SAN DIEGO, 4 MAY

The visa crackdown on International students has thrown them into turmoil as some cancel their overseas and domestic travel and others have even 'lying low' so as to avoid being stripped of their legal status for minor infractions.

On summer break from a PhD programme, an international student at University of California, San Diego, cancelled a trip with a few friends to Hawaii. Any travel, even inside the US, just didn't seem worth the risk.

"I probably am going to skip that to ... have as few interactions with governments as possible," said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of being targeted.

At least 1,220 students at 187 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records.

The number of affected students appears far higher, though. At least 4,736 international students' visa records were terminated in a government database that maintains their legal status, according to an April 10 Immigration and Customs Enforcement response to inquiries from Congress.

After federal judges raised due process concerns in several students' cases, the US government reversed the terminations but then issued new guidance expanding the reasons international students can lose their legal status in the future. *—PTI*

Mexican Prez bins Trump's troops offer

MEXICO CITY, 4 MAY

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Saturday that she rejected US President Donald Trump's proposal to send American troops into Mexico to help her administration fight drug trafficking.

Her remarks to supporters in eastern Mexico came in response to a Wall Street Journal report on the spar between the two leaders.

"We can work together, but you in your territory and us in ours," Sheinbaum said adding, "Sovereignty is not for sale. Sovereignty is loved and defended."

Trump administration has designated many gangs and cartels as foreign terrorist organizations lending law enforcement more resources to act against them. White House National Security Council spokesman James Hewitt said that Trump has worked closely with Mexico's president "to achieve the most secure southwest border in history." *—PTI*

Germany hits back at Rubio's defence of AfD

WASHINGTON DC, 4 MAY

Germany strongly defended its decision to classify the Alternative for Germany (AfD) as a right-wing extremist party amidst US Secretary of State Marco Rubio criticised the move, calling it "tyranny in disguise."

German's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "This is democracy. This decision is the result of a thorough & independent investigation to protect our Constitution & the rule of law. It is independent courts that will have the final say. We have learnt from our history that right-wing extremism needs to be stopped."

In a post on X on Friday, Marco Rubio said, "Germany just gave its spy agency new powers to surveil the opposition. That's not democracy--it's tyranny in disguise. What is truly extremist is not the popular AfD--which took second in the recent election--but rather the establishment's deadly open border immigration policies that the AfD opposes. Germany should reverse course."

Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz, or the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the country's intelligence agency, on Friday stated, "As of today, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) classifies the Alternative for Germany (AfD) as a confirmed right-wing extremist endeavor due to the extremist nature of the party, which disregards human dignity." *—ANI*

SpaceX launch site is new city of Starbase

McAllen, 4 May

The South Texas home of Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket company is now an official city with a galactic name: Starbase after an election was 212 in favour to 6 against, according to results published online by the Cameron County Elections Department. Musk celebrated in a post on his social platform, X, saying it is "now a real city!" Starbase is the facility and launch site for the SpaceX rocket programme. *– PTI*

Mike Pence to be awarded for courage

Boston, 4 May

Former Vice President Mike Pence on Sunday will receive the John F Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for his refusal to go along with President Trump's efforts to remain in office after losing the 2020 election. The award recognises Pence "for putting his life and career on the line to ensure the constitutional transfer of presidential power on Jan. 6, 2021." Pence will receive it at Boston's JFK Library. *– PTI*

Aus PM promises an orderly govt

MELBOURNE, 4 MAY

Australia's re-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday was greeted by well-wishers at a Sydney café, where he promised a 'disciplined, orderly government to confront cost of living pain and tariff turmoil.

Albanese's centre-left Labor Party won an emphatic victory in elections on Saturday. As the vote counting continued, the government was on track to win at least 85 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form an administration. Labor held 78 seats in the previous Parliament, and gaining seats in a second term is rare in Australian politics.

> **Voters chose unity rather than division**
>
> —Anthony Albanese, Australian Prime Minister

"The Australian people voted for unity rather than division," Albanese said at the café in Leichhardt where he and his fiancee Jodie Haydon gathered with colleagues and supporters for coffee. "We'll be a disciplined, orderly government in our second term, just like we have been in our first."

Albanese said he frequented the cafe as a child with his late mother, Marryanne Albanese, a single parent who became an invalid pensioner. She raised her only child in public housing nearby. "I did certainly think of her last night as well. She would be very proud," Albanese said of his mother, also a member of the Labor Party.

Reminiscent of Canada's contest, opposition leader Peter Dutton lost his parliamentary seat. and his alliance won only 37 seats. *—PTI*

Romania holds election rerun amid political crisis

BUCHAREST, 4 MAY

- Top Court voided a previous election due to allegations of voter violations and Russian interference which Moscow has denied.

Romanians are voting today in a crucial presidential election re-run following last year's annulled vote, which plunged the country into its worst political crisis in decades.

Eleven candidates are competing, with the likelihood of a runoff on 18 May. Romania's political landscape was upended last year when a top court voided the prior election due to allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

Anti-establishment sentiment is strong, driven by high inflation, a substantial budget deficit, and a sluggish economy. Observers suggest hard-right nationalist George Simion will likely advance to the runoff against either Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan or the governing coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu.

While Antonescu aims to maintain Romania's pro-Western stance. Simion, who is aligned with the far-right and has sought to connect with disenchanted voters, argues for a reform of the political system.

The outcome of this election is watched keenly as it strives to restore democracy and maintain alliances. *—PTI*

AGAINST UKRAINE

Putin 'hopes' nukes won't be needed

MOSCOW, 4 MAY

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in comments broadcast Sunday that the need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine had not arisen and that he hopes it will not.

In a preview of an upcoming interview with Russian state television, published on Telegram, Putin said Russia has the strength and the means to bring the conflict in Ukraine to a "logical conclusion."

Responding to a question about Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Putin said: "There has been no need to use those (nuclear) weapons ... and I hope they will not be required."

Municipal workers clean up near burnt cars in the residential area following Russia's drone attack in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday *PHOTO: X*

"We have enough strength and means to bring what was started in 2022 to a logical conclusion with the outcome Russia requires," he said.

The statements come in the wake of Putin signing a revamped version of Russia's nuclear doctrine in November 2024, that allow him to use Moscow's atomic arsenal, the world's largest to even a conventional attack backed by a nuclear power.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday, dismissed Moscow's announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire next week in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II ahead of Russia's annual celebrations. Zelenskyy instead renewed calls for a more substantial 30-day pause in hostilities, as a meaningful step toward ending the war.

Meanwhile, 11 people including 2 children were wounded in a Russian drone attack overnight in Kyiv, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said Sunday. Russia fired a total of 165 exploding drones and decoys, including two ballistic missiles. Russia's Defence Ministry said it shot down 13 Ukrainian drones.. *—PTI*

Presidential candidate Crin Antonescu casts his vote in the first round of the presidential election redo in Bucharest, Romania, Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

7 TOP 10 FIRMS SEE MCAP SURGE OF ₹2.31L CRORE

Reliance Industries emerge as week's biggest gainer

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 1,64,959.62 crore to Rs 19,24,235.76 crore **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 valued firms surged by Rs 2,31,177.3 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer amid a largely optimistic trend in equities.

While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys and ITC emerged as the gainers in the top-10 pack, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance and Hindustan Unilever faced losses in their valuation.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,289.46 points or 1.62 per cent. Equity markets were closed on Thursday for "Maharashtra Day".

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 1,64,959.62 crore to Rs 19,24,235.76 crore. Bharti Airtel's valuation surged by Rs 20,755.67 crore to Rs 10,56,029.91 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 19,381.9 crore to Rs 10,20,200.69 crore in its valuation.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank rallied by Rs 11,514.78 crore to Rs 14,73,356.95 crore and that of Infosys zoomed Rs 10,902.31 crore to Rs 6,25,668.37 crore.

ITC's mcap climbed Rs 2,502.82 crore to Rs 5,38,294.86 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by Rs 1,160.2 crore to Rs 7,14,014.23 crore.

However, the market valuation of Bajaj Finance eroded by Rs 15,470.5 crore to Rs 5,50,726.80 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever declined by Rs 1,985.41 crore to Rs 5,45,845.29 crore and that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) dipped by Rs 1,284.42 crore to Rs 12,45,996.98 crore.

The RIL remained the most valued firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and ITC. *—PTI*

FPIs brought in ₹4,223cr in April

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) turned net buyers in India's equity markets in April 2025, injecting Rs 4,223 crore after three months of sustained outflows. This marks a significant reversal, with earlier outflows totalling Rs 3,973 crore in March, Rs 34,574 crore in February, and Rs 78,027 crore in January. The latest inflow has helped reduce the year-to-date net outflow to Rs 1.12 lakh crore.

Analysts attribute this turnaround to a mix of favourable global cues and strong domestic fundamentals. Key drivers include a weakening US dollar, a strengthening Indian rupee, and optimism surrounding a potential US-India trade agreement. Additionally, robust quarterly results from major Indian companies bolstered investor confidence.

VK Vijayakumar of Geojit Investments highlighted two pivotal developments: the US' declared 90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs, which stabilised global markets, and the decline in the US dollar index from 111 in January to 99, which redirected flows to emerging markets like India.

Despite the equity inflows, FPIs withdrew Rs 13,314 crore from the debt general limit and Rs 5,649 crore from the voluntary retention route, reflecting caution in the fixed income segment. *—PTI*

US eyes profitable trade terms: GTRI

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The Donald Trump administration in the US is expected to push for sweeping changes in India's policies, ranging from tariff reductions to regulatory overhauls, that could benefit American firms and exporters, under the proposed bilateral trade agreement with India, think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Sunday.

In the agricultural sector, the GTRI said the US demands include scaling back India's minimum price support (MSP) programs for crops like rice and wheat, removing restrictions on genetically modified (GM) imports, and lowering farm tariffs.

Similarly, on dairy, the US argues that India's GM-free feed certification and facility registration protocols effectively bar American dairy imports.

Indian rules prohibit imports from animals fed with animal-derived feed, for example, butter from a cow fed meat due to religious sensitivities. "India considers this policy non-negotiable," GTRI Founder Ajay said. *—PTI*

Liberal FDI policy opens larger avenues: Deloitte

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

India's liberalised foreign direct investment (FDI) policy offers stability, predictability, and sector-agnostic opportunities for global investors, according to Deloitte India.

R Majumdar, Economist at Deloitte India, said the move signals not just openness but also stability, enabling global investors to tap into India's vast and expanding economy. She noted that sectors such as pharmaceuticals, automotive, and tourism are not only attracting FDI but also driving employment, exports, and innovation.

Backed by a USD 70 billion National Monetisation Pipeline and the development of industrial corridors across 100+ cities, India is offering 'plug-and-play' investment-ready zones. Majumdar added that trade agreements are supporting the Make in India initiative. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

I-T dept directed to monitor top advance tax payers

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The CBDT has directed income-tax officials to "closely" monitor top advance tax payers and identify bogus claims of exemptions and deductions as part of the strategy to improve direct tax collections during the current financial year. Official sources told PTI that the Central Board of Direct Taxes, the policy-making body for the department, had recently issued the central action plan (CAP) for 2025-26 that acts as the guiding light to steer "key performance areas" for the department vis-a-vis revenue collection work. The Union government has set a target of Rs 25.20 lakh crore for the I-T department under the direct taxes head for the current fiscal, as per the Budget estimates presented in February. *—PTI*

India to exhibit SVAMITVA at World Bank Conference

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

India's SVAMITVA scheme -- a massive project to digitalise land records — will be in global focus at the World Bank Land Conference that begins on Monday in the US capital. An official said, a delegation led by Secretary of Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) Vivek Bharadwaj, comprising of Joint Secretary of MoPR Alok Prem Nagar, and Additional Surveyor General of Survey of India Shailesh Kumar Sinha, will represent India at the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC. The conference, themed "Securing Land Tenure and Access for Climate Action: Moving from Awareness to Action," is scheduled to be held from 5 May to 8 May. The SVAMITVA scheme involves high-resolution drone mapping, a nationwide CORS network ensuring 5 cm accuracy, and platforms like Gram Manchitra that enable climate-aligned village planning. *—PTI*

Corp Affairs Min to cut off over 3K firms from records

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

The corporate affairs ministry is set to strike off the names of more than 3,300 companies from the official records after receiving applications for removal of their names. Registrar of Companies (RoC) from various states and Union Territories issued public notices regarding striking off the names of these companies in April in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, as per the latest data available with the ministry. More than 3,300 companies across states and Union Territories are set to be struck off from the official records, the data showed. Out of the total, there are over 700 such companies in Maharashtra, nearly 500 in Delhi, more than 350 in Karnataka, over 200 each in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, among other places. *—PTI*

Centralised KYC system in works: Sebi

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Markets regulator Sebi is actively working with the Ministry of Finance and other financial regulators on setting up a centralised KYC (Know Your Customer) system, chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey has said.

The Central KYC is an online database that maintains KYC records of customers in a centralised manner, aiming to streamline compliance across financial institutions.

When asked about the common KYC system, Pandey told PTI, "Yes, I think we will move forward on that also. We're really trying to have a system which will be very, very effective."

He added that the Finance Secretary is chairing the committee responsible for this initiative, and efforts are underway to expedite the process. While no definitive timeline was shared, Pandey expressed optimism, saying, "It should be done quite early." *—PTI*

Govt sacks IMF chief sans notice

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

In an unexpected move, the government has terminated services of KV Subramanian as the executive director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) six months ahead of his three-year tenure.

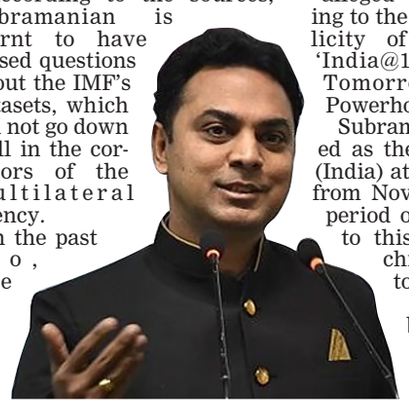
The move comes days before the IMF executive board is to consider financial aid for debt-ridden Pakistan. Post-Pahalgam terror attack last month, India is making efforts to corner Pakistan diplomatically and at various global fora as New Delhi believes its involvement in the attack that led to killing of 26 tourists.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has terminated Subramanian's services effective 30 April, 2025, sources said.

The reasons for Subramanian's exit have not been officially announced.

The sources said the government would soon find his replacement to be nominated to the IMF board as Executive Director.

According to the sources, Subramanian is learnt to have raised questions about the IMF's datasets, which did not go down well in the corridors of the multilateral agency.



In the past too, the IMF has been unhappy with some of the statements made by Subramanian, especially related to India's debt situation.

Besides, the sources said, concerns were raised over an "alleged impropriety" relating to the promotion and publicity of his latest book, 'India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse'.

Subramanian was appointed as the executive director (India) at the IMF with effect from November 1, 2022 for a period of three years. Prior to this, he served as the chief economic adviser to the government.

The executive board of the IMF is composed of 25 executive directors. *—PTI*

SUMMER EFFECT

Petrol, diesel demand rose in April by 4%

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

India's diesel consumption rebounded in April 2025, rising by 4 per cent to 8.23 million tonnes, the highest-ever volume for the month and second-highest for any month on record. The surge follows months of sluggish or negative growth and is driven by the onset of summer, which boosts rural irrigation and urban air-conditioning demand.

Diesel, which remains India's most consumed petroleum product and a key fuel for transport and agriculture, had grown only 2 per cent in the financial year ending March 2024, with no growth the year before. The April boost also reflects increased usage linked to electioneering, a trend observed in previous years.

Despite a shift in passenger vehicles to petrol, CNG and electric alternatives, diesel still accounts for 38 per cent of all petroleum products consumed in India. Industry officials say diesel demand is now over 10 per cent higher than pre-Covid levels and is expected to grow in the coming years. *—PTI*

Forex reserve up 8th straight week

MUMBAI, 4 MAY

India's foreign exchange reserves (Forex) rose by USD 1.983 billion to USD 688.129 billion in the week that ended on April 25, extending gains for the eighth straight week, official data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) this week showed.

Despite eight consecutive rises in the Forex the reserve remained below the all time high of USD 704.885 billion which was achieved in the last September previous year.

The RBI data shows that foreign currency assets (FCAs) witnessed an uptick of USD 2.168 billion reaching at USD 580.663 billion.

The RBI data shows that foreign currency assets witnessed an uptick of USD 2.168 billion reaching at USD 580.663 billion **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

The FCAs are the largest components of the foreign exchange reserves which reflects the valuation impact of non-US currencies like euro, pound, and yen kept in the reserves. They are written in the dollar terms. In the reported week, the gold reserves with the RBI declined by USD 207 million, standing atUSD 84.365 billion. *—ANI*

CHOUHAN UNVEILS GE RICE VARIETIES

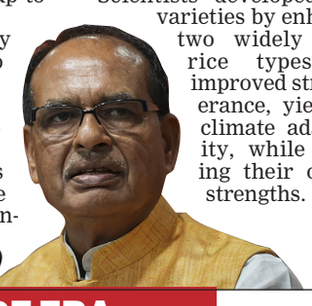
NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday unveiled the first genome-edited (GE) rice varieties "DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1" developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to address challenges of climate change and boost rice yields by up to 30 per cent.

"It is an important day for us... Soon, these two new rice varieties will be made available to farmers," Chouhan said, adding that the new varieties will enhance rice yields by 20-30 per cent, conserve water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from rice cultivation.

These varieties are recommended for major rice-growing states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, and West Bengal.

Scientists developed these varieties by enhancing two widely grown rice types with improved stress tolerance, yield, and climate adaptability, while retaining their original strengths. — *PTI*



END OF SIX-DECADE ERA

Warren Buffett announces intent to retire, Abel may hold the helm

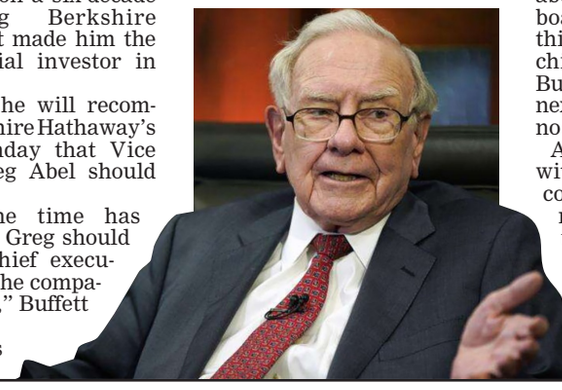
OMAHA, 4 MAY

Billionaire Warren Buffett shocked an arena full of shareholders Saturday by announcing that he will retire at the end of the year, bringing the curtain down on a six-decade run leading Berkshire Hathaway that made him the most influential investor in the world.

Buffett said he will recommend to Berkshire Hathaway's board on Sunday that Vice Chairman Greg Abel should replace him.

"I think the time has arrived where Greg should become the chief executive officer of the company at year end," Buffett said.

Abel has been Buffett's designated successor for years, and he already manages all of Berkshire's noninsurance businesses. But it was always assumed that he would not take over until after Buffett's death. Previously the 94-year-old Buffett always said he had no plans to retire.

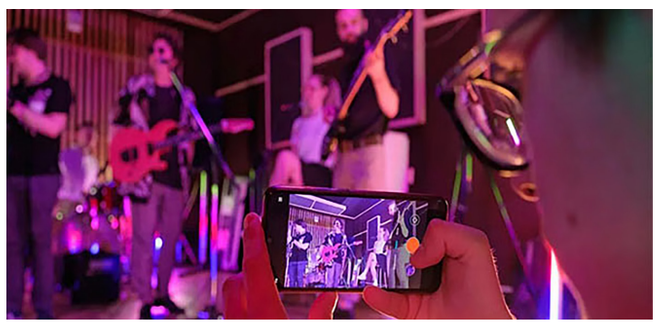


Buffett announced the news at the end of a five-hour question and answer period without taking any questions about it. He said the only board members who knew this was coming were his two children, Howard and Susie Buffett. Abel, who was sitting next to Buffett on stage, had no warning.

Abel returned an hour later without Buffett to conduct the company's formal business meeting, and he responded to the news. "I just want to say I couldn't be more humbled and honored to be part of Berkshire as we go forward," Abel said. — *PTI*

India's screen entertainment to touch $17B, says report

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY



The screen entertainment market in the country is estimated to touch USD17 billion by 2029, driven by digital platforms and sustained by television and movies, according to a joint report by Media Partners Asia (MPA), IP House and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Online video will contribute USD 8.6 billion, making it the largest revenue segment by 2029, driven by affordable data, mobile penetration and the rise of localised digital content, the report said.

Television, while slightly declining, remains a close second at USD 6.8 billion, underscoring its widespread reach and cultural inertia across Indian households. Movies are set to earn USD 1.9 billion, recovering steadily through hybrid release strategies and multiplex revival, as per the report.

Together, the three formats signal a shift from traditional to digital, while still coexisting in a hybrid, multi-screen future, the report added.

It said that by 2029, online video will account for 50 per cent of all screen entertainment revenue, surpassing television and redefining how the nation watches its stories unfold. The joint report projects total content investments to reach USD 7.5 billion by 2029, and online video is set to match television's share of spending for the first time. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Ledecky, Walsh break world records on final day

MIAMI, 4 MAY

Katie Ledecky broke her longstanding world record in the 800m freestyle, and Gretchen Walsh lowered her 100m butterfly world mark twice in one day as the Tyr Pro Swim meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, concluded on Saturday.Nine-time Olympic gold medallist Ledecky clocked 8min 4.12sec to win the 800m freestyle -- the event that catapulted her to stardom when she won it at the 2012 London Olympics when she was 15.Ledecky, 28, improved on the previous record of 8:04.79 that she set at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics on August 12, 2016.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

PBKS replace injured Maxwell with Mitch Owen

NEW DELHI, 4 MAY

Punjab Kings have picked Australian all-rounder Mitch Owen as a replacement for the injured Glenn Maxwell, who was ruled out of the remaining IPL season after fracturing his finger. The Australian stalwart, who has had an underwhelming IPL season this year, could only manage 48 runs in seven games with six single-digit scores. Maxwell suffered the injury before PBKS' rainout game against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens on 26 April, in which he was dismissed for seven runs.—*PTI*

Aditi Ashok shoots 66 and rises to tied-20th at BDC

IVINS, 4 MAY

India's Aditi Ashok shot one of her best rounds of the season as she landed seven birdies against one bogey in a round of 6-under 66 that carried her up to the tied 20th place in the Black Desert Championship here. With rounds of 69-71-66, she is 10-under and eight shots behind the leader, Haeran Ryu of Korea, who has shot 63-67-68 to be 18-under. Starting from the first, Aditi began with three pars and then birdied four times between the fourth and the ninth to turn in 4-under. On the back nine, Aditi birdied the 11th and the 12th and dropped a shot on the 14th and finished with a birdie on the 18th. Aditi, who has been finding the fairways and the green regularly, needed 27 putts as against 31 on the second day.—*PTI*

Kedarling leads Army 1-2 in men's air pistol at KSSM

BHOPAL, 4 MAY

Army shooters took five of the top six positions as Kedarling Balakrishna Uchaganve struck gold, relegating teammate Ajay Kumar Ambawat to silver in the men's 10m air pistol event at the 23rd Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial (KSSM) Shooting Championship here. Navy's Ujjawal Malik won bronze, preventing what would have been an Army medal sweep in the event. Aiming for the M.P. State Shooting Academy range Finals Hall on Saturday, both Kedarling and Ajay went into the last two shots of the 24-shot final tied at 223.6, and the latter even fired a perfect 10.9 on his 23rd to go 0.7 ahead. However, a 9.6 put paid to his hopes as Kedarling win by 0.3.—*PTI*

Parag's 95 in vain as KKR beat RR by 1 run in thriller

Kolkata keeps IPL playoff hopes alive

Andre Russell not out 57

HYDERABAD, 4 MAY

Andre Russell roared back to form with a blistering unbeaten fifty as Kolkata Knight Riders resisted Riyan Parag's stunning 95 to edge out Rajasthan Royals by one run in an IPL thriller that kept the defending champions' slim playoff hopes alive here on Sunday.

Russell, who had been under scrutiny for his indifferent form this season, smashed a 25-ball 57 as KKR smashed 85 runs in the last five overs to post a commanding 206/4.

In reply, Rajasthan found themselves in tatters at 71/5 inside eight overs, and they needed 105 runs from the last 48 balls before stand-in skipper Parag kept their hopes alive through his knock off 45 balls (6x4, 8x6). But smart bowling changes from skipper Ajinkya Rahane ensured that Parag got out five short of his maiden IPL century, before Vaibhav Arora held his nerves under pressure in the final over, keeping RR down to 205/8. The Royals required 22 runs off the last over, but Impact Shubham Dube launched Arora for two sixes and a four to bring the equation down to three runs off the final delivery. But a smart field switch by Rahane, placing Rinku Singh at long-on, proved decisive as his sharp throw found Arora at non-striker's end, who ran out Jofra Archer to seal the thrilling win. KKR now have 11 points from as many games and have moved up to sixth on the points table, but still need to win the remaining three matches to have a sniff at the play-offs. Before the tense finale, RR's chase began ominously. Vaibhav Suryavanshi (4) departed in the first over, and Kunal Singh Rathore followed for a duck, leaving the Royals reeling at 8/2 in the second over.

Brief Score

Kolkata Knight Riders: 206 for 4 in 20 overs (Andre Russell 57 not out; Jofra Archer 1/30)..

Rajasthan Royals: 205 for 8 in 20 overs (Riyan Parag 95, Yashasvi Jaiswal 34; Varun Chakravarthy 2/32, Moeen Ali 2/43, Harshit Rana 2/41)—*PTI*

> No reason for Dhoni to replace Khaleel, despite leaking 33 runs in the 19th over, he has done well
>
> -Stephen Fleming, Chennai Super Kings head coach

> Kuldeep Yadav is one match-winner that India can't afford to miss in the upcoming Test series in England
>
> -MSK Prasad, Former chairman of selectors

DC take on SRH, hoping to break their losing streak

HYDERABAD, 4 MAY

Delhi Capitals skipper Axar Patel would like to quickly forget the underwhelming performances of his side in home conditions and get their stuttering campaign back on track when they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad, who are teetering on the edge of elimination, in an IPL match here on Monday.

Delhi Capitals' recent defeats, the latest a 14-run loss to Kolkata Knight Riders, have damaged their campaign. However, they have managed to keep their playoff hopes alive thanks to their success on rival territory, something they will be eyeing when they face Pat Cummins' side.

With Axar Patel nursing an injury, he had walked off the field during KKR's batting after injuring his left hand on 30 April. It remains to be seen if the charismatic all-rounder has recovered fully in the intervening period.Axar suffered a bruise while fielding, but despite the discomfort, he smashed a 23-ball 43. However, the wound, if not fully healed, could come in the way of the left-arm spinner bowling his full array of variations.Delhi Capitals, currently placed fifth on the table with 12 points from 10 games. —*PTI*

SRH VS DC

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	25
SRH Won:	13
DC Won:	12

SRH vs DC Match starts at 7.30 pm IST

Indian women's hockey team beats Australia 1-0

PERTH, 4 MAY

The Indian women's hockey team saved the best for last as they beat formidable Australia 1-0 in a thrilling match to notch their lone win and end the tour on a high here on Sunday.

Striker Navneet Kaur scored the match-winner in the 21st minute at the Perth Hockey Stadium. India had lost 3-5 and 2-3 to Australia 'A' side before going down 0-2 and 2-3 to the Australia senior side on May 1 and 3 May.

The visitors dished out their best hockey in the fifth and final game of their Australia tour, prevailing over the hosts in a closely-contested affair.

In the first quarter, Australia dominated play and won two penalty corners, but India's resilient defence denied them the opening goal.

Six minutes into the second quarter, India clinched the lead courtesy of a field goal from vice-captain Navneet Kaur, who had also scored in India's 2-3 loss on Saturday.

India women's hockey team secured a good 1-0 wins

PHOTO: X / @THEHOCKEYINDIA

It was a cagey affair in the second half with both teams eyeing to score, but India held their composure at the back and successfully defended their slim lead. In the final quarter, Australia earned a crucial penalty corner, but they squandered the chance to concede victory to the visitors. —*PTI*

IN SEVEN YEARS

SL record first win against India after Nilakshi's effort

COLOMBO, 4 MAY

All-rounder Nilakshika Silva brought her years of experience in a counter-attacking 33-ball 56 as Sri Lanka humbled India by three wickets -- their first win in seven years against their fancied rivals -- in a women's Tri-series match here on Sunday.

This was India's first loss in the event, but they are still expected to make the title clash thanks to their convincing wins in their first two matches.

Asked to bat first, India posted a competitive 275 for nine riding on swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh's 48-ball 58..Sri Lanka completed the chase with five balls to spare after slipping to 152 for four in the 33rd over. After Nilakshi flattened the Indian bowlers with her three sixes and five fours, Anushka Sanjeewani (23 not out off 28 balls) and Sugandika Kumari (19 not out off 20 balls) got the job done for Sri Lanka to push the third team, South Africa, on the verge of elimination.In the chase, Hasini Perera (22 off 27 balls) was run out after a direct throw from Deepti Sharma, but Harshitha Samarawickrama added 78 runs for the second wicket with Vishmi Gunaratne (33 off 58 balls) to lead Sri Lanka's response. —*PTI*

SL beat India by three wickets

PHOTO: X

Hammers and Spurs keep up poor league form

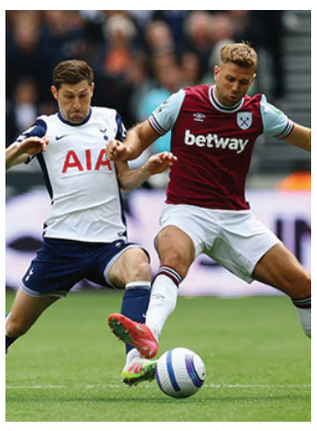
LONDON, 4 MAY

London rivals West Ham United and Tottenham Hotspur's disappointing Premier League form continued as they played out a 1-1 draw on Sunday that kept both stuck just above the relegation places.

A much-changed Spurs scored the opener after 15 minutes through Wilson Odobert, but the lead lasted only 13 minutes before Jarrod Bowen equalised for the home team.

The draw left Tottenham in 16th spot and facing their worst finish since 1977.

They are a single point above the 17th-placed Hammers, whose winless run in the league was extended to eight games, stretching back to February —*PTI*



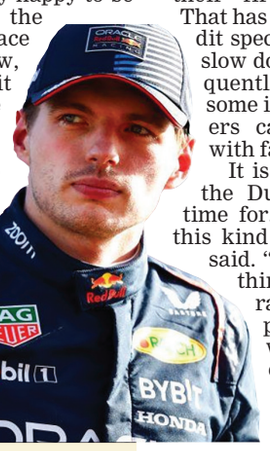
Max Verstappen wins pole position

DUBAI, 4 MAY

Red Bull's Max Verstappen grabbed pole position for Sunday's Miami Grand Prix with a blistering fastest lap of 1:26.204 in qualifying on Saturday. The Dutchman was 0.065 of a second ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris, with 18-year-old Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes again impressing as he powered into third place on the grid. There was more disappointment for seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton in his first season with Ferrari as he was eliminated in Q2, and the Briton will start in 12th place.

Verstappen's aggressive approach in the first sector of his lap paid off and gives him a chance for a third win in four years at Miami.

"It has been a great qualifying. We improved the car a tiny amount, too. Q1, Q2, Q3 just improving every run, trying to find the limit. It worked out well. I'm very happy to be on pole," said the Dutchman. "Race pace, I don't know, we have to wait and see with the weather, to be honest, the colder the better. No one has done any long running with the sprint race here." The Dutchman announced on Friday that he had become a father for the first time with his girlfriend Kelly Piquet, giving birth to their first daughter, Lily.



That has prompted some pundit speculation that he may slow down, reflecting a frequently heard belief of some in the sport that drivers can lose their edge with fatherhood.

It is not an opinion that the Dutchman has much time for. "I don't listen to this kind of silly things," he said. "I just do my thing. I think there are enough racing drivers in the past who have been world champions even after having kids. —*PTI*

Lahiri finishes 45th, registers first win

INCHEON, 4 MAY

Anirban Lahiri produced a tame even par finish with 72 and ended the week at Liv Golf Korea in Tied-45th place here.

Lahiri's rounds were 68-79-72 for a total of 3-over.

The Indian was, however, part of the winning team, Crushers, which were led by the individual winner, Bryson DeChambeau of the US. DeChambeau, starting the final day with a four-shot lead, carried his team, Crushers, to twin success, as he won the individual title and also led his team to victory. —*PTI*

20TH CAREER TITLE

Sabalenka beats Gauff in straight sets

MADRID, 4 MAY

No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka beat No. 4 Coco Gauff in straight sets to win her record-tying third Madrid Open and 20th career title. Sabalenka powered through the first set and edged the American in a tie-breaker for 6-3, 7-6 (3) on the Caja Mágica clay court.

Sabalenka added to her titles in Madrid in 2021 and 2023 and equaled Petra Kvitova's tournament record. It was also Sabalenka's tour-leading third title of the year after Brisbane and Miami. She also pulled level with Gauff on head-to-head with five wins apiece. Gauff could have risen to No. 2 with a victory. The 2023 U.S. Open champion lost only one set this week until the final. Gauff's great record in finals slipped to nine wins in 11.

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus holds a trophy after winning the Madrid Open tennis final in Madrid, Spain

PHOTO:X / @SABALENKAA

Sabalenka battered Gauff with her drive early on, winning 17 consecutive points during one section for a 4-1 start. When Gauff found her weakness by spreading her shots around, the former champion dug in to force a second-set tiebreaker and crush any chance of a comeback. Sabalenka missed a championship point on a break chance in the second set, recalling her failure to convert three championship points in a loss to Iga Swiatek in last year's final. After yelling at herself for her missed opportunity, the three-time Grand Slam winner shook off her demons, settled down, and finished off her tour-high 31st win of 2025. —*PTI*

Napoli move step closer to Serie A crown

LONDON, 4 MAY

Napoli remained three points clear at the top of Serie A on Saturday after a hard-fought 1-0 win at Lecce, while title rivals Inter Milan beat Verona by the same score ahead of their Champions League semi-final showdown with Barcelona. Antonio Conte's team is one step closer to a second league title in three seasons, thanks to Giacomo Raspadori's well-struck free-kick in the 24th minute of a match which was briefly stopped by home fans' fiery protest against the league following the death of a beloved club physio.

Napoli need seven points from their final three games of the season against Genoa, Parma, and Cagliari to guarantee a fourth league crown after their fourth straight win without conceding a goal. And that's assuming reigning champions Inter win all three of their concluding league matches at Torino, against Lazio, and at 10th-placed Como, who earlier secured a fifth consecutive win in Serie A for the first time in their history with a 1-0 success at Parma. —*PTI*